

# COUNCIL POLICY



## Cowra Regional Art Gallery Policies



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Council Department	Corporate Services
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Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every four (4) years to ensure it meets all statutory requirements in reference to Cowra Shire Councils Corporate plan and reflect the activities and role of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery in management and collection development.

Revision History

Version	Council Meeting Date	Resolution No.	Responsible Officer
2	28 September 2020	245/2020	Director-Art Gallery

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## **I. Collection Policy**

### **I.1 Introduction**

1. The aim of this policy is to identify the decision–making process for shaping the permanent collection of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery. It articulates the principles and processes by which the collections will be developed as a community and cultural resource of excellence and significance. It is also intended to be a guide for the staff and Gallery Advisory Committee to allow them to make effective and consistent decisions in relation to collection development and management. The word “collection” will be taken to mean a number of collection’s held by the Cowra Regional Art Gallery under the terms identified in this document as follows:
  - i) The Gallery Collection
  - ii) The Calleen Collection
  - iii) The Olive Cotton Collection
  - iv) The POW Collection
  - v) The Sculpture Park Collection
2. The Collection will be developed in tandem with the revised Exhibition Policy and will focus on the following:
  - i) Art by leading Australian contemporary artists to build on the existing collection;
  - ii) Art by significant Australian artists which will promote a distinct identity of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery and the collection;
  - iii) Add to the development of the visual arts in Cowra and the region;
  - iv) Acquire works of art suitable for the purpose of enhancing the Cowra Sculpture Park

In general, “contemporary” will be taken to mean art practices from the twenty-year period leading up to the present time.
3. The word “artist” as used in this document, will embrace practitioners of various disciplines, including painting, sculpture, photography, print making, clay, textiles, glass, video, multi-media and design. The term “art” will be taken to refer to work or activities in any media (traditional or new, permanent or transitory, static or temporal) that may be produced by these practitioners.
4. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery recognises the historical and educational importance of the permanent collection, and will be responsible for its development, conservation, care and display.
5. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will seek to be a place where contemporary artists feel welcome, respected and supported. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will foster a sense of care and regard for artists’ work, and for the organisation of the records of their work and activity.
6. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will take all measures to ensure that works are not destroyed, mutilated or altered. This will not restrict bona fide conservation work.
7. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will establish a reputation for ethical conduct, professional standards, and fair respectful dealing with all sections of the art community and the general public.

8. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will seek to protect the freedom of artistic expression, and oppose any proposal, from whatever source, that attempts to restrict the form or content of artistic activity within its programs.
9. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will develop its collection in a spirit of collaboration with other public institutions, where possible avoiding the duplication of established roles, and in response to changing institutional needs.
10. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will seek to prevent, in all its activities, any exercise of discrimination on the basis of race, culture, creed, gender or sexual preference.
11. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will ensure that its programs and services recognise Australia as a multicultural society, in which social diversity is appreciated.  
  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, in particular, will have a recognised place within Cowra Regional Art Gallery programs and activities.
12. Where the works of any indigenous peoples are acquired for the Cowra Regional Art Gallery collection the interests and participation of the relevant groups will be an important factor in the collection and treatment of this art.
13. Sponsorship, donations and other patronage will be actively sought and appreciated, but will not determine or shape Cowra Regional Art Gallery policies, and will not compromise or hinder the professional commitments or public obligation of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery.
14. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery is managed by the Gallery Director who reports to the Director–Corporate Services.

## **1.2 Collection Policy Objectives**

To provide purpose built facilities, staffing and equipment to ensure storage, conservation, display, and framing of the art collection are undertaken according to national standards for Australian Museums and Galleries and industry best practice, including workplace health and safety standards and environmentally sustainable practices.

### **1.2.1 Areas of Collecting and Collection Development**

The Cowra Regional Art Gallery through the Gallery Director in conjunction with the Gallery Advisory Committee under the following guidelines will acquire works of art:

- i. Which expand the body of work (oeuvre) of important artists already in the Collection;
- ii. Adding to existing works of a period which is represented in the collection;
- iii. By contemporary Australian artists or groups which extend the existing collection, relative to and representative of a variety of materials and diverse styles, forms, technique and media including painting, sculpture, works on paper, textiles, clay, glass, photography, mixed media, video and digital media;
- iv. By contemporary artists or groups which have made significant contributions to the development of Australian art (including indigenous artists and artists from culturally diverse backgrounds);
- v. By contemporary artists or groups which have made significant contributions to the development of the visual artists in the region and Cowra's history, heritage and its cultural connections with other countries and cultures;

- vi. Which promote a distinct identity for the Cowra Regional Art Gallery, for example the collection of winners of the Calleen Art Award.

### 1.2.2 Acquisition Strategies

1. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will acquire works for the collection through purchase, exchange, gift and bequest.
2. All works proposed for accession into the collection other than winners of the Calleen Art Award will be the responsibility of the Gallery Director in accordance with the collection criteria and in consultation with the Gallery Advisory Committee. An opinion may be sought from an outside person with appropriate expertise, if required. The accession date of the work will be the date of the Gallery Advisory Committee meeting at which the acquisition is approved.
3. The criteria for acceptance of a work into the collection will be.
  - i. The merit and quality of the work
  - ii. Its relevance to the areas of collecting and collecting policy
  - iii. Its relationship to works in the collection and its ability to extend the scope of the collection.
4. When considering proposed gifts or bequests, the Gallery Director will first examine their compatibility with areas of collecting. Special conditions attached to such works will be rejected if they contravene policy or inhibit the Cowra Regional Art Gallery's exercise of judgement concerning the use of its collection.
5. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery through the Gallery Director will be attentive to the regulations and procedures of the Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, when considering any gift proposed through this scheme.
6. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery through the Gallery Director reserves the right to negotiate varied approaches to payment for acquisitions, including phased payment, for the maximum benefit of the Gallery.
7. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will respect matters of confidentiality or specific trust, and will not normally disclose prices paid for works.

### 1.2.3 Acquisition – Code of Ethics

1. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery recognises the need for co-operation and consultation between museums with similar or overlapping interests and collecting policies.
2. In acquiring works, the interests of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery must be the sole consideration. At all times members of the Gallery Advisory Committee and Gallery staff must ensure that they do not place themselves in a situation involving conflict of interest with the Cowra Regional Art Gallery. Further the members of the Gallery Advisory Committee and Gallery staff must not seek, in any activity, to obtain personal financial benefit directly or indirectly through their participation with the Cowra Regional Art Gallery.

3. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will not purchase any works of art from current staff members or members of the Gallery Advisory Committee, or accept donations from any of the above if the donor is also the author of the work.
4. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will be mindful of sanctions governing the acquisition of any biological or geological material that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection law, material history conservation law, quarantine regulation or treaty, except with the consent of appropriate outside authorities.
5. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will be mindful of religious sanctions attached to certain objects in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other indigenous people's cultures, and must not acquire or exhibit an object in breach of these sanctions.
6. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery must not acquire or exhibit objects if the Director has reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances in which they were originally collected involved the unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other indigenous people's ritual places or other known archaeological sites.
7. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will not acquire any object, whether by purchases, gift, bequest or exchange, unless the Director is satisfied that a valid title can be acquired to that object.

### **1.3 Overview of the Gallery Collection**

1. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will integrate the development of the Gallery Collection with the management of resources for its care and presentation.
2. When acquiring works, the Cowra Regional Art Gallery will give due consideration to the management of resources required to house and maintain these works for posterity.
3. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will document all acquisitions and loans, to facilitate identification, provenance and research.
4. All works accepted by the Cowra Regional Art Gallery into the collection will be professionally conserved and maintained.
5. Whenever appropriate and feasible, the Cowra Regional Art Gallery will provide public access to the collection, and to reference material relating to the collection.

### **1.4 Presentation of the Collection**

1. In presenting the collection, the Cowra Regional Art Gallery will seek to stimulate awareness of the complexity of social processes that surround the objects in its care. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will ensure that the collection is placed within varying contexts, by pursuing a vital program of temporary exhibitions and related events.
2. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will not display an object if, in the opinion of the Gallery Director, the condition of that object would be seriously impaired.

3. When appropriate, the Cowra Regional Art Gallery will maintain records of artists' instructions for the presentation of their work. Where practical and reasonable, any such instructions will be respected when installing works from the collection.

### **1.5 Loans from the Collection**

1. It is the responsibility of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery to make its collection accessible to a wide public. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery's obligation to care for its collection will be taken into account when evaluating all proposals to lend works to Regional State Galleries.

### **1.6 Research**

1. Research is a fundamental part of the activities of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery. Staff research will include the documentation and interpretation of the various aspects of the collection, cataloguing of the collection, and information on artists.
2. Research done by staff and volunteers on the collection of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery is the property of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery unless contracted otherwise.
3. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will give full acknowledgment of authorship to all research carried out on its behalf.

### **1.7 Disposal of the Collection**

1. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery regards the right to deaccession and dispose of works as a necessary part of developing the collection to its fullest potential, and of responsible collection management.
2. Gifts made under the Cultural Gifts Program will not be returned to the donor as the donor has already received the benefit of a tax deduction for the gift.
3. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will always approach the deaccession and disposal of works with extreme caution, and incorporate delay and review mechanisms in its procedures for disposal.
4. No work of art will be disposed of unless the Gallery Advisory Committee formally identified major and sufficient reasons for doing so.
5. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will observe any legal conditions pertaining to its right of disposal.
6. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will deaccession a work in a manner it considers most beneficial to the collection and to the future of the work. This may include sale, exchange, gift or destruction. Only public or non-profit institutions may receive the gift of a deaccessioned work. Destruction of a work will be considered only if the object is dangerous or has for some reason deteriorated beyond repair.
7. The process for the disposal of works will be as follows:
  - a. The Gallery Director will propose to the Gallery Advisory Committee works to be considered for deaccession with supporting reasons why this course should be followed.



- b. The Gallery Advisory Committee by unanimous vote will agree that the work should be considered for deaccession but a three month period should then elapse before the matter is finally resolved (unless the object is dangerous or has deteriorated beyond repair). This is to allow consultation with interested parties such as donors and their families or other appropriate people with an interest in the work.
  - c. After three months the Gallery Advisory Committee will again consider the works for deaccession taking into account all relevant views canvassed in that time. A unanimous vote of the Gallery Advisory Committee is required for the work to be disposed of or until the matter is finally resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.
8. Full records will be kept of any object disposed of and the process whereby the decision to dispose was made.
  9. Any proceeds gained from disposal will be credited solely to acquisition funds.
  10. At no time will a staff member, volunteer, Gallery Advisory Committee member, or any person formally connected with the Cowra Regional Art Gallery, be permitted to acquire a deaccessioned work of art directly from the Cowra Regional Art Gallery.
  11. Any works purchased with funds specifically derived from the proceeds of the sale of a disposed artwork which had been donated will be credited as the gift of the original donor and all efforts will be made to have it approved by the original donor.

## **2. Exhibition Policy**

### **2.1 Introduction**

1. The aim of this policy is to guide and direct the conceptual development and implementation of exhibitions at the Cowra Regional Art Gallery including the scope and types of exhibitions which will constitute the Cowra Regional Art Gallery exhibition program.
2. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will effectively develop and present a diverse and informed program of stimulating, educational, and culturally significant exhibitions. The exhibition program contributes to the cultural life and the social heritage of Cowra for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors to the region.
3. The term *artist* used in this document will embrace practitioners of various disciplines including painting, sculpture, photography, print making, clay, textiles, glass, video, multi-media and design. The term *art* will be taken to refer to work or activities in any media, permanent or transitory, that may be produced by these practitioners.
4. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will seek to be a place where artists feel welcome, respected and supported. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will foster a sense of care and regard for artists' work in all matters of handling and display. Curatorial decision for exhibition display lies with Gallery Director.
5. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will establish a reputation for ethical conduct and professional standards in dealing with works of art lent by artists, private collectors and lending institutions.

6. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will seek to protect the freedom of artistic expression, and oppose any proposal, from whatever source, that attempts to restrict the form or content of artistic activity within its programs.
7. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will develop its exhibition program in a spirit of collaboration with other public institutions and where possible, avoid duplication of roles.
8. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will seek to prevent in its exhibition program any exercise of discrimination on the basis of race, culture, gender or sexual preference.
9. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will ensure that its exhibition program recognises Australia as a multicultural society in which social diversity is appreciated. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, in particular, will have a recognised place within the exhibition program.
10. Where the works of any indigenous peoples are exhibited by the Cowra Regional Art Gallery, the interests and participation of the relevant groups will be an important factor in the display of the works.
11. Sponsorships, donations and other patronage will be actively sought to support the exhibition program. However, this will not determine the content or scope of the program.

#### 2.1.1 Scope and Balance

1. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will show exhibitions which are curated by the Cowra Regional Art Gallery Director, guest curated, or received from appropriate outside sources.
2. Within an annual program, no less than fifty percent of the artists included in the exhibition program should be connected with Cowra, the Central West region and NSW (grant funding requirement).
3. Within an annual program, a reasonable attempt should be made to achieve gender balance among the artists whose work is shown.
4. Cowra Regional Art Gallery will develop and support exhibitions which are innovative, challenging and critically engaged, notwithstanding that they may be controversial.
5. Cowra Regional Art Gallery will regularly exhibit work from its permanent collection. These displays will be integral to the Cowra Regional Art Gallery exhibition program and will be changed periodically to achieve maximum public access to the permanent collection.
6. Cowra Regional Art Gallery exhibitions will vary in terms of focus, size, scope and intended audience. Where possible exhibitions will extend the notion of Cowra Regional Art Gallery being a gallery that presents a diverse program of the visual, where issues of current social, political and cultural debate are addressed through the work of artists.
7. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will endeavour to present a balanced annual exhibition program of contemporary art and craft practices and projects with a social and historical context. At least a mixture of the following types of exhibitions should be presented each year: national touring exhibitions of excellence, projects relevant to youth in the region, and 'in house' regional exhibitions with guest curator or collection based exhibitions.

8. Cowra Regional Art Gallery will, where appropriate, present exhibitions in collaboration with other institutions or to complement exhibitions or events organised by other institutions or other sections of Cowra Regional Art Gallery.

#### 2.1.2 Code of Ethics and Institutional Responsibilities

1. At all times, the staff and Gallery Advisory Committee of Cowra Regional Art Gallery shall ensure that they do not place themselves in a position involving possible conflict of interest with Cowra Regional Art Gallery. Further they will not seek to obtain personal financial benefit through their involvement with the Cowra Regional Art Gallery exhibition program.
2. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will not exhibit any works of art by current Gallery Advisory Committee or staff members in a solo exhibition but participation in group exhibitions is allowed.
3. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will be mindful of sanctions governing the handling or displaying of biological or geological material that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection law, material history conservation law, quarantine regulation or treaty, without the consent of the appropriate authorities will not exhibit such material.
4. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will be mindful of religious sanctions attached to certain objects in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other indigenous peoples' cultures. It will not exhibit objects in breach of these sanctions.
5. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will not exhibit objects if the Gallery Director has reasonable grounds to believe that the circumstances in which they were originally collected involved the intentional destruction or damage of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other indigenous peoples' ritual places or other known archaeological sites.
6. Where appropriate and feasible the Cowra Regional Art Gallery will respect the installation and display requirements of artists.

#### 2.1.3 Institutional Responsibilities

1. The Cowra Regional Art Gallery will give proper acknowledgment of authorship in display labels at all times for works included in exhibitions.
2. All works borrowed from private or institutional lenders will be insured by the Cowra Council to the level nominated by the lenders and agreed by the Gallery Director for the entire period they are absent from the lender, both while in transit and while installed in Cowra Regional Art Gallery. Where an exhibition is toured by Cowra Regional Art Gallery this insurance cover will be extended to cover the entire period of the tour. Any variation to this arrangement will only be at the request of the lender.
3. All works borrowed for exhibition at Cowra Regional Art Gallery will have the Cowra Regional Art Gallery loan form completed for it. One copy will be retained by Cowra Regional Art Gallery and the other sent to the lender.
4. The Gallery Director will liaise with and develop close working relationships with other regional galleries, local art groups and organisations and State and Federal support organisations.

5. The Gallery Director will provide public and education programs through workshops, seminars and lectures and promote the Gallery and programs in order to maintain and encourage new audiences.

### **3. Gallery Advisory Committee Responsibilities**

1. It is the responsibility the Gallery Director to plan, organise and implement the exhibition program, with the assistance of the Advisory Committee as required.
2. The Gallery Advisory Committee shall form sub-committees as required to plan and present with the Gallery Director special fundraising events and activities.
3. All recommendations by any Gallery Advisory Sub-committee shall be reported to the Gallery Advisory Committee in consultation with the Gallery Director for final approval.
4. The Gallery Director is responsible for the preparation, implementation and supervision of the budget of the Gallery, including the preparation and approval of all funding strategies, applications and acquittals.
5. The Gallery Director is responsible for the preparation, implementation and supervision of all Gallery procedures and policies including the volunteer program. The Gallery Advisory Committee is responsible to assist the Gallery staff to facilitate the Gallery procedures and policies, and make recommendations to the Gallery Director and Council.
6. The Gallery Advisory Committee must ensure the acquisition policy and a deaccessioning policy are subject to a uniform evaluation process.
7. The Gallery Advisory Committee must develop close relations with Council and report regularly to it. It must develop a relationship of transparency and trust with Council.
8. The members of the Committee are in a fiduciary relationship with the Gallery and thus, in matters concerning the Gallery, must put the interests of the Gallery before their own.
9. When a Gallery Advisory Committee member is acting in his or her role as a Committee member of the Gallery, the interests of the Gallery must prevail over the interests of any other organisation, even if that member is a member of or an appointee of that other organisation.
10. Each Gallery Advisory Committee member must provide a declaration of interests that sets out their business, memberships and company shareholdings and this list will be publicly available. It is the responsibility of each member of the Gallery Advisory Committee to ensure that his or her details are accurate and regularly updated.
11. Each member of the Gallery Advisory Committee has a duty to be an active contributor to the work of the Gallery Advisory Committee and the Gallery and has an obligation to work for the cultural success and good governance of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery.
12. Gallery Policy will be developed in tandem with the Gallery Exhibition policy and priority will be given to promoting a distinct identity of the Cowra Regional Art Gallery while exploring the forces that culturally affect and shape the region. It is the responsibility of the Gallery Advisory Committee to assist with policy development and the responsibility of the Gallery Director for the implementation of all Gallery policies.

13. The Gallery Advisory Committee recognises that it is essential to good governance that correct channels of communication be maintained in matters relating to the affairs of the Gallery. All official statements, press releases, official relations with Council, instructions to the Director and the like, shall be carried out through the Chair of the Committee.