

Significant Events



– a museums & galleries training program

Kylie Winkworth & Dr Sharron Dickman



Training and Professional Development Program
Museums Australia (Queensland) and Regional Galleries Association of Queensland





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(Museums Australia (Qld)/Regional Galleries Association of Queensland)
Level 3, 381 Brunswick Street
Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
Phone 07 3215 0845
Fax 07 3215 0846
Email profdev@powerup.com.au
www.maq.org.au/profdev/

Editing and project management

Ann Baillie & Rebecca Dezuanni, Training and Professional Development
Program (MAQ/RGAQ)
Design Maryann Long, m@+ design
Printing SNAP Printing Fortitude Valley

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foreword

The museums and galleries of regional and metropolitan Queensland are the custodians of our State's cultural heritage.

This cultural heritage has enormous potential significance for shaping and informing Australia's sense of identity as a nation.

Without innovative interpretation, communication and marketing of these collections – and associated stories – the national significance of these local museum and gallery collections would be unrealised.

During the Centenary of Federation of Australia it is vital that the significant stories embodied in the cultural heritage of our state be effectively documented and imaginatively interpreted to communicate Australia's achievements since Federation.

To assist in this tremendous task, the partnership of Museums Australia (Qld) and Regional Galleries Association of Queensland has devised a training program for museums and galleries in Queensland.

Significant Events – a museums & galleries training program is the result.

Significant Events, like 180 other projects, has been financially assisted by the Queensland Government through the Queensland Community Assistance Program of the Centenary of Federation Queensland.

Both a series of practical workshops and a specially designed resource kit, *Significant Events* empowers the paid and non-paid staff of museums and galleries throughout Queensland to develop interpretive programs and design events and public programs to engage communities with their own history and endeavour.

Significant Events assists museums and galleries to adopt a more contemporary approach to the interpretation of their collections; it develops improved skills in venue management and event marketing; and most importantly it encourages museums and galleries to reflect on the legacy they are leaving for future generations.

Significant Events therefore has proved not only an invaluable resource for museums and galleries during this year of the Centenary of Federation, it will also prove invaluable for museums' and galleries' custodial role in the years to come.

Peter Beattie MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

Significant Events – a museums & galleries training program is intended for use by those working – in a paid or unpaid capacity – in small museums, regional galleries, historical societies, or with heritage projects and sites. Accordingly, this kit can also be used by those who are involved in local history, visual arts or cultural development activities in libraries and local government authorities throughout the state.

While the aim of the kit is to enable museums and galleries to fully develop and effectively market exhibitions and projects highlighting the Centenary of Federation in 2001, the continued use of the kit post-2001 is strongly encouraged.

From the outset, the objective has been to ensure the skills developed through both the seven regional workshops and the kit be applicable to museums' and galleries' future planning of exhibitions and events.

To this end, the kit has been organised into three complimentary sections. *Part One – Introduction to the Centenary of Federation* – outlines the historical framework for Federation as a milestone in Australia's history and provides a snapshot of events that are planned and have taken place during the year 2001. More importantly however, the introductory section of the publication encourages users of the kit to start to think beyond 2001, and to link their future exhibitions and events to key dates and 'themed' years to focus attention on their own institutions and programs as part of a wider context.

Parts two and three outline thematic and planning frameworks as well as provide step-by-step checklists to assist the processes involved in –

- developing displays, exhibitions, and interpretive programs for significant events; and
- marketing and event management of projects for significant events.

In her section – *Developing Interpretive Programs* – Kylie Winkworth encourages museums and galleries to rethink their collections and the policies governing them. This evaluation is carried out to ensure that distinctiveness of place is reflected in both the collections and the programs developed by your museum or gallery. Themed templates – land and environment, water, youth, cultural diversity – are then used in conjunction with the step-by-step guide to developing displays and exhibitions to tell unique stories about your locale and your community.

Dr Sharron Dickman then builds on this in *Part Three – Marketing & Project Management* – by outlining step-by-step guides to developing and managing events. Numerous checklists summarise how to ensure planning is smooth both pre- and post-the event. Everything from managing an organising committee to the evaluation of your success of the event (or otherwise) is covered in this section.

A bibliography providing opportunities for further reading and a short glossary is also included in each section.

It is hoped museums and galleries will find the *Significant Events* kit to be clear, concise and user-friendly. It is also hoped the kit enjoys an extended life with many museums and galleries long after the Centenary of Federation has passed.

There are numerous opportunities to engage your community with collections and events that form part of your museum's and gallery's calendar – use this kit for some inspiration (if inspiration is what is needed) or to ensure your planning process is sound and your event is attracting the attention it deserves!

Kylie Winkworth

Kylie Winkworth is a leading Australian museum consultant and expert on evaluating the significance of heritage collections. Kylie is a Trustee of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney and former chair of the Museums Committee of the Ministry of the Arts (NSW). She has a particular interest in moveable heritage and objects with associated stories or provenance. Kylie has a long-standing involvement with community museums, and has worked to develop better funding and policies for the sector. In collaboration with Roslyn Russell, she has produced a framework for assessing the significance of museum collections, entitled *Significance*, published by the Heritage Collections Council in 2001.

Dr Sharron Dickman

Dr Sharron Dickman is a widely published writer and specialist on arts marketing, public relations and cultural event management. Sharron has worked as a consultant in marketing and public relations for cultural attractions, as a museum director and marketing manager. She has lectured at Deakin University, Monash University and James Cook University in marketing, tourism, arts and event management. Her publications include *The Marketing Mix*, *The Pocket Guide to Arts Marketing* and *What's my plan?: a guide to developing arts marketing plans*, all published by the Australia Council for the Arts, as well as textbooks on tourism and Bed and Breakfasts. With her husband, Sharron also operates a B&B in Balliang, Victoria.

part **one**

INTRODUCTION TO
CENTENARY OF FEDERATION





1 Introduction – Centenary of Federation

The Year 2001 marks a very special time in Australian history – the Centenary of Federation.

The State, Territory and Federal Governments are planning an exciting year-long program of activities to reach across rural, regional and metropolitan areas.

Some of these events will be major events, but in many ways the smaller events being planned in virtually every community across the nation will be the events that bring the Centenary close to the people.

Planning a successful event – whether it is the re-enactment of the first sitting of Parliament at the Melbourne Exhibition buildings or the mounting of a photo exhibition of the early days of a small outback community – requires time, energy and commitment.

This guide is designed to assist museums, galleries and historical societies to plan successful Centenary of Federation events that will have a positive impact on their community and be rewarding for those who are involved in creating and delivering the event, and rewarding for everyone who attends.

The benefits of linking your local activities with the Centenary of Federation framework

Linking your local events with the Centenary of Federation activities will provide you with the opportunity to benefit from the extensive publicity that will be generated around the Centenary and Centenary events.

Some communities have successfully applied for Centenary of Federation project grants to assist with specific activities in their community. Of course, they will deliver these projects under the banner of the Centenary of Federation Queensland.

Even if your community hasn't had the opportunity to plan Centenary events until now, it is not too late! You can still plan local exhibitions, activities and events which will help your community celebrate the Centenary.

Linking your local Centenary events with other events elsewhere in Queensland – and around the country – will provide you with additional opportunities for publicity, and will help increase awareness and, hopefully, attendance at your event.

A (very) brief history of Federation

Before 1901 Australia consisted of a group of British colonies, each conducting its affairs independently. The decision to collectively become a Federation was the result of a very long, and sometimes frustrating, process.

The Federal Council of Australasia was formed by the Premiers of the colonies in 1883. The possibility of forming a federation was further fuelled by a number of events which occurred in 1889. The Report on the State of Defence of the Australian Colonies strongly recommended closer ties for defence reasons and "federation" was the recommended model.

That same year, Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of the colony of New South Wales, called on the separate colonies to "unite and create a great national government for all Australia" and Queenslanders voted, by a very narrow margin, to join such a Federation.

At the National Australasian Convention, which took place in Sydney in 1891, delegates adopted the proposed name "Commonwealth of Australia" and agreed to draft a Constitution which was subsequently written aboard the *Lucinda* (the Queensland Government's steam yacht) which was moored on the Hawkesbury River, NSW.

The Convention adopted the proposed Constitution on 9th April, 1891, but it had no legal status. The next step required legislative agreements – and at this point, the push to federation stalled due to the lack of appropriate legislative processes and the concerns of individual colonies about their status and autonomy.

While the politicians debated, popular support for federation was encouraged through the formation of Federation Leagues. In 1893 the first of a series of Federation League "peoples' conventions" was held at Corowa, NSW, and resolved to call on the colonial parliaments to pass Enabling Acts to allow the election of delegations to write a full Constitution – which would then be submitted to a referendum in each colony.

The 1885 Hobart Understanding of the Premiers (with caveats from Western Australia and Queensland) agreed to implement the Corowa resolutions, and most of the colonies passed the required Enabling Acts during 1895-1896 (although the Queensland legislation was not passed until quite late – 1899).

Constitutional Convention delegates, elected for each colony, met in 1898 and 1899 and the Second National Australasian Convention was held. The state referenda voting began and 'Yes' votes were approved in Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia. The New South Wales referendum failed. Queensland, still concerned about several issues in the Constitution, held off their referendum. Later in 1899 the Premiers met again and agreed to amend the Constitution Bill to meet the concerns of New South Wales and Queensland and to site a federal capital in New South Wales – but not within 100 miles of Sydney.

A new referendum was then held (1899) and 'Yes' votes were recorded in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland (and by Western Australia in mid-1900).

On July 5, 1900, the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act was passed by the British House of Commons, and the House of Lords and Queen Victoria proclaimed that the Commonwealth of Australia, comprising all six colonies, would come into existence on 1 January 1901. Lord Hopetoun was appointed first Governor-General. The Proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia took place at an official event in Centennial Park, Sydney. *Advance Australia Fair* (which officially became the national anthem in 1984) was sung at the inauguration ceremony.

Sir Edmund Barton was elected the first Prime Minister of Australia. The First Commonwealth Parliament was declared open by the Duke of Cornwall and York (later George V) at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. While Canberra was being built, the Federal Parliament continued to meet in Victoria – in the Victorian Parliament building. Twenty-six years later, the tenth Commonwealth Parliament was formally opened in Canberra on 9 May, 1927.

An equally brief history of Queensland and Federation

The colony of Queensland was formed in 1859 when it split from New South Wales. Queensland's support for Federation varied from region to region. While Brisbane and Ipswich were against Federation, the central and northern regions supported it as a way to ultimately negotiate a division of Queensland into entirely new states and overcome the "domination" of Brisbane.

Queensland had developed and decentralised differently to other states, following the railway lines which carried goods and people inland. As a result, each of the port areas to which the railways linked developed as their own centres of influence and strength. The regional transport hubs also became critical for mining and pastoral development. Fierce regionalism and rivalries developed between the regional ports and Brisbane. Rockhampton and Townsville dominated the central and northern regions, and argued that such a large state could not properly be governed from its "south east corner".

Northern separatists had been active since shortly after Queensland's separation from New South Wales in 1859, and petitions were made to the Queensland colonial government to create separate colonies based in Bowen and Rockhampton. Plans were put forward to create a new territory called Albertland. While there was some sympathy for the problems and concerns expressed by the regions, and changes were made in financial administration, the idea of separation was not supported

either by the Queensland government or British authorities.

After 1897 the separationists turned their attention to federation. They believed that a federal Australian government might support them and that the federal government could be persuaded to override Brisbane and create separate Queensland states.

Samuel Griffith, a former Queensland Premier, was vice-president of the National Australasian Convention of 1891 and chairman of the committee which drafted the constitution. (Griffith later became first Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia). His active participation did not reflect the feelings in southern Queensland which were fiercely opposed to federation.

On the 2nd September, 1899, Queensland held its first referendum on Federation and voted in favour by the narrowest of margins (38,488 for; 30,996 against). Of all the colonies, Queensland returned the smallest majority in favour of federation and there was a significant difference between the town and country vote. Brisbane and Ipswich were strongly opposed. Toowoomba and Rockhampton also voted against federation. Rural and regional areas supported the move towards federation which did not, ultimately, result in their hoped-for creation of new states.

Centenary of Federation provides an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the differences – and the similarities – found across the state.

Key national and state Centenary of Federation projects

A number of Centenary of Federation major events, travelling exhibitions and re-enactments are planned around Australia in 2001. The National Council for the Centenary of Federation and the Centenary Committees in each State and Territory are working together to organise the year's activities.

"Centrepiece" events, attracting Australia-wide and international interest, will be held in each State and Territory and are being jointly supported by the National Council and the respective States and Territories. The following list gives you an idea of the range of events planned. Remember, this is just a small listing of the many events being planned.

Key National and State Events

National projects

Youth Envoys Program

- ✱ designed to give young Australians a role. One hundred young Australians aged 15-16 will be chosen from the States and Territories (and external territories) to attend four key national events in 2001 in Sydney, Melbourne, Alice Springs and Canberra. The Envoys will also act as ambassadors for the Centenary of Federation, and help in encouraging community participation. Envoys will be asked to keep a record of their experiences in whatever form they choose and these records will be archived as a lasting reminder of the Centenary of Federation Program from a youth perspective.

The Ringing of the Bells

- ✱ To herald the start of Federation celebrations and symbolically unify the nation, there will be a 5-minute synchronous ringing of bells from belltowers in major cities and regional towns across the country on the 1st of January. Local communities will also be encouraged to take part, so that wherever there are bells in good working order – in schools, churches, stations, etc. – they too will ring out to celebrate the centenary. Individuals can also participate by ringing their own bells, and community groups will be encouraged to band together for communal ringing of bells.

Federation Gallery

- ✱ The National Archives of Australia in Canberra, working with the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, will open a permanent public exhibition gallery where the nation's founding documents will be displayed. It will be a unique showcase of the nation's "birth certificate" documents, representing the evolution of our constitutional democracy. The gallery will be a permanent reminder that in a democracy the government derives its authority from the people and the system depends on the active participation of its citizens.

Centenary of Federation Medallion

- ✱ All primary school children in Australia and its external territories will be presented with a specially struck Centenary of Federation medallion as a memento of the year. Presentations will take place between May 7–9. Schools are being encouraged to develop a range of special Federation activities.

Peoples' Voice

- ✱ an internet-based project to encourage Australian communities to contribute their own stories, using words and images, to a national website.

Peoplescape

- ✱ To celebrate the spirit of Australia, individuals and groups will have the opportunity to create representations of their personal heroes – someone they feel has significantly affected their lives, their communities or their country. The life-size, person-shaped "canvas" figures will be brought to Canberra in late 2001 to form a Peoplescape of thousands of figures which will be assembled on the slopes of Parliament House, on the lawns of Federation Mall and around Old Parliament House.

New Dawn — Uluru Sunrise

- ✱ At dawn on the first day of 2001, a special message will be prepared and sent to Sydney for the Journey of a Nation Parade – inviting all Australians to travel to the heart of the country to come together at Alice Springs in September 2001.

The Federation Parade (1 January 2001)

- ✱ set to be the biggest, most spectacular parade ever seen in Australia, with 6,500 people and giant, majestic floats. The parade will tell the story of our past 100 years and commemorate the significant achievements and challenges Australia has faced. It will reflect the importance of why we are celebrating Centenary of Federation and will be a collaboration of the past, present and future. Broadcast live across Australia, the parade will travel for 3.6 kilometres from the Sydney Opera House to Centennial Park and will take between 1.5 to 2 hours to pass any one point.

Centennial Ceremony

- ✱ On 1 January 2001, Centennial Park will come alive with over 100,000 people celebrating the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia in our 100th year. Broadcast live across Australia, the Centennial Ceremony will commence in Centennial Park at twilight (8.00pm) and combine spectacular pageantry and Australia's most eminent performing artists with official addresses from leaders of our nation. The Ceremony program will run for 85 minutes and will feature segments with a strong sense of story linked through musical segues and projected imagery which makes use of sophisticated theatre and event technologies.

Royal Exhibition Buildings — A Nation United

- ✱ will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia at the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne. As in 1901, dignitaries from across Australia and throughout the world will be invited to attend this truly historic event on 9th May, 2001. The combined resources of the Commonwealth Parliament, the Federal Government and the State

Government of Victoria will be utilised to ensure that this event will be the major ceremonial celebration for the Centenary of Federation.

Commonwealth Parliament Melbourne Sitting

- ★ On the morning of Thursday 10 May the Commonwealth Parliament will assemble at the Victorian Parliament House, Melbourne, where it sat for 27 years beginning in 1901. As in 1901, the House of Representatives will sit in the Legislative Assembly and the Senate will sit in the Legislative Council. This Sitting, under the direct control of the Commonwealth Parliament, is seen to be a major focus of the importance of Victoria in the development of the Federal Parliament and indeed the nation.

National Museum of Australia Opening

- ★ scheduled for March, 2001, the Opening of the National Museum will be part of the Lake Burley Griffin spectacular, a full day event designed to explore the role of the national capital in the life of the nation.

Australian Army Centenary Celebrations

- ★ Celebrations will be held nationally to celebrate the Centenary of the Army.

Forging the Nation —

<http://www.awm.gov.au/forging/>

- ★ The latest Australian War Memorial travelling exhibition is a window into the history of Australia's first twenty years, 1901-1921. This period, chosen as it represents the two founding decades of the Commonwealth, provides wide scope for the use of the Memorial's remarkable collections. The exhibition will tour nationally to both metropolitan museums and regional areas.

Rural Agricultural Shows

- ★ The Agricultural Societies Council of NSW plans to distribute medallions to shows from the Federal Council of Agricultural Societies to celebrate the Centenary of Federation — to be used for special events and winners (Grand Champions etc.). All shows will be encouraged to have a Centenary of Federation theme in all displays and pavilions.

Questacon Travelling Exhibition

- ★ The Shell Questacon Science Circus is a travelling, interactive science and technology exhibition. The major outreach program of Questacon will provide a program of science shows and public exhibitions in regional and rural areas from March to November 2001. The exhibition is transported in a large colourful pantechonicon and staff visit schools to perform entertaining science shows. The exhibition

will set up in public venues such as town halls and civic squares. In 2001, the Science Circus will travel from its base in Canberra to more than 30 regional areas in five mainland states.

London to Sydney Air Race

- ★ The race will start from the Biggin Hill Air Show near London and finish in Sydney with 28 ports of call involving 16 countries. Australian stops will include Darwin, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Mt Isa, Longreach, Rockhampton and Coolangatta. Fifty entries will be accepted for the race.

'Yes' for Australia (South Australia)

- ★ a South Australian travelling exhibition that illustrates the story of Federation through South Australian eyes. Historical records, traditional materials, memorabilia and contemporary information will be featured from the collections of State Records, the History Trust and the State Library.

Unity and Nationhood: Celebration of Federation (New South Wales)

- ★ a travelling exhibition of New South Wales State Archives relating to Federation, together with an association guide to the records used in the exhibition. This exhibition will visit regional areas of NSW and country Victoria. The exhibition will include copies of records relating to the events leading up to Federation, the celebration of Federation itself and the selection of the Federal Capital site.

From Source to Sea — River Boat Spectacular (South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria)

- ★ Seventeen large paddle-steamers and heritage vessels will travel together in a flotilla with dozens of smaller leisure boats up the River Murray. Towns and communities along the river from Goolwa to Echuca are organising events to coincide with the arrival of the flotilla. There will be paddleboat races, old style balls, picnics, regattas, evening fairy light processions on the water, fireworks, and water sports. A program will give details so schoolchildren, tourists and local communities will know exactly where and when they will be able to see the historical fleet passing under bridges and through locks, loading wood or participating in events. The journey will conclude with a traditional style regatta at Goolwa on the October long weekend in 2001.

VFL Federation Football (Victoria)

- ★ In 1901, the VFL Match Arrangement Committee scheduled the Round Two League matches to be played on Thursday, 9 May 1901, to celebrate the Opening of the Commonwealth Parliament at the Royal Exhibition Building. In 2001, Federation Football will be held on 5-6 May and will recreate the

games played in 1901. In addition, there will be a national focus on youth, multicultural and indigenous influences and representation which will showcase the future of AFL Football.

The Gathering (Tasmania)

- ✳ The Gathering will celebrate Tasmania's strong sense of community through performance art. The focus will be on all social aspects of Australia's language and literature. Emphasis will be on heritage, the diverse cultural mix and the contemporary lifestyle that Australians share.

Federation Whale Boat Regatta (Western Australia)

- ✳ The reconstructed whaleboat, Federation Lady, from the original Albany fleet, will be launched as part of this regatta.

Federation Frontline (Northern Territory)

- ✳ Commemorating the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942 when a total of 243 people lost their lives. Australians will be asked to join the people of Darwin in a minute's silence (19th February at 9:58 CST) to commemorate the bombing of Darwin and remind Australians of the role servicemen and women and civilians played in defending Australia, as well as encouraging reflection on the way war has shaped the nation.

Queensland events

The Queensland Government, through its Centenary of Federation Queensland Committee, aims to:

- plan and manage a statewide program of celebrations offering a diverse range of cultural and other activities for all ages, ethnic groups and regions
- provide a framework and context in which local communities can achieve their own celebratory program for Federation
- coordinate a program of activities in collaboration with other appropriate events, including Millennium events, throughout the state
- contribute in a meaningful way to the overall national celebrations for the Centenary of Federation
- leave a lasting legacy to Queenslanders and the nation

The Queensland Government has allocated \$10.2 million dollars for community projects that celebrate federation and nationhood. Taking into account Queensland's unique history, size, geography and decentralisation as a State, Centenary of Federation Queensland will strongly focus on projects and events relating to themes of:

- Land, including its use by early indigenous peoples, settlers and pastoralists, industry and agriculture, sporting and cultural uses, environmental issues,

urbanisation and the use of the land in the future

- Water, including the sea, rivers, waterways, wetlands, rainforest, eco-tourism, the Barrier Reef and marine parks, environmental issues, water sporting activities and our coastline
- Environment, including the natural legacy we leave to our children
- Youth, the future of our nation
- Multiculturalism, the basis of our culturally diverse society. By ensuring that celebrations are inclusive of all the peoples of Australia we will contribute to a greater sense of national unity and purpose
- Indigenous people – the first Australians

Centenary of Federation Queensland will work with local communities to organise twelve major events, one per month in twelve regional areas of Queensland. These dates include March 29/30, the centenary of the election to send delegates to the first Commonwealth Parliament.

The twelve distinct regions and their major urban centres are:

January – the Gold Coast

February – Wide Bay/Burnett
(Bundaberg/Maryborough)

March – Greater Brisbane

The Federation Concert and the Brisbane River Procession

- ✳ The Concert will feature a 500 voice community choir, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the Queensland Youth Orchestra and the Opera Queensland Chorus. The spectacular procession will move down the Brisbane River through the heart of Brisbane. It will include hundreds of specially designed boats and barges and will involve indigenous, multicultural, community and arts groups displaying their history and culture and exploring the nominated themes of youth, environment, land and water.

April – Fitzroy (Rockhampton/Gladstone)

May – South West (Roma/Charleville)

June – Central West (Longreach/Winton)

July – North West (Mt Isa/Normanton)

August – North (Townsville/Charters Towers)

Federation Fire and Water Spectacular

- ✳ Townsville is home to the largest military garrison in the country. The event will combine thematic elements that showcase Australia's beautiful and fragile natural environment, the diversity of the Australian landscape and the involvement of the defence forces in the civil life of Australia.

September – Far North (Cairns/Cooktown)

October – Darling Downs (Toowoomba/Warwick)

November – Central Queensland (Mackay)

December – Sunshine Coast

In addition to the major event program, a wide range of other community-based celebratory activities and events, construction and development projects have been funded in smaller centres, in response to local requests and initiatives.

In the first three rounds of funding, more than 175 community groups and local councils received project funding under the Centenary of Federation Queensland Community Assistance Program.

These programs embrace a wide range of activities including the development of adventure playgrounds, cycling, walking and horse riding trails, youth clubs, heritage centres, and Federation parks and gardens.

There are, as well, many programs concerned with local history, cultural heritage, multiculturalism, archival and photographic exhibitions, museum developments, travelling exhibitions, theatre and opera productions, and commissioned artworks.

Other Queensland Centenary of Federation activities, programs and resources

Queensland Heritage Trails Network

Queensland Heritage Trails Network is a partnership between the Queensland Government, Commonwealth Government and local communities. The Heritage Trails Network will enable communities to work with their heritage places, collections and stories to stimulate economic activity and increase employment.

Federation Matters

Federation Matters, a Queensland education resource package, has been developed to assist teachers and students to investigate issues surrounding the Federation of Australia. The kit, developed by practising teachers, has components relevant to school students of all ages and links to a number of syllabuses including the Studies of Society and Environment syllabus, which has Federation studies in the core content section.

National Trust of Queensland

The National Trust of Queensland has developed ten trunks of educational material about living in Queensland houses during 1901. The trunks will be made available to Queensland schools on a loans basis.

1901 and All That

In addition, the National Archives of Australia's *1901 and All That* Federation Resource Kit for teachers of middle secondary students will provide resource materials for use in the classroom.

How will Centenary activities be promoted?

Centenary of Federation activities will be widely promoted. There will be a National Awareness Campaign produced by the National Council for the Centenary of Federation in Canberra. The campaign, which began in 1999 will include print, radio and television advertising. Two key slogans will be used in the national campaign, "Australia it's what we make it" and "I'll be there".

The Federal Government has committed more than \$1 billion under its Federation Fund to finance major infrastructure projects – \$29.6 million for Federation Community Projects and \$70.4 million for the Federation Cultural and Heritage Program. All these projects will receive extensive national and local publicity during 2001; this will build awareness of Centenary and interest in Centenary activities.

The Centenary of Federation Queensland Community Awareness Campaign also aims to raise awareness of the Centenary, particularly in Queensland. As well, the State Event Campaign will be promoting the '12 month' and the '12 region' statewide events program. Again, there will be extensive advertising and publicity.

There will also be the Regional Event Campaigns (as outlined above) for each of the 12 specific Centenary of Federation Queensland event regions. Advertising and publicity will begin about six weeks before each region's designated month, building awareness, anticipation and interest. By linking your event in with other Centenary events you'll be able to build on, and benefit from, all this promotion and media exposure.

But what will happen after 2001?

It is important to remember that although there will be a lot of interest and activity surrounding Centenary of Federation, it isn't the only significant event around which activities can be planned.

Other significant events might include those relating to major national or international celebrations (for example the International Year of the Volunteer in 2001 or the Year of the Outback in 2002); or Queensland-specific events or milestones (such as Queensland's Sesquicentenary in 2009, the Goodwill Games in Brisbane in 2001).

You can also plan special exhibitions and events to link in with annual regional festivals such as the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers or Dalby Cotton Week & Harvest Festival.

The following list will remind you of some major dates and occasions, but don't forget to check with local multicultural organisations and ethnic groups to find out what dates are important for residents of your community.

Major dates

1 January New Year's Day
26 January Australia Day
14 February Valentine's Day
17 March St. Patrick's Day
25 April ANZAC Day
1st Monday in May Labour Day
2nd Sunday in May Mothers' Day
2nd Monday in June Queen's Birthday (except Western Australia)
4 July American Independence Day
14 July Bastille Day
2nd week of August RNA Royal National Show, Brisbane
1st Sunday in September Fathers' Day
4th Thursday in November Thanksgiving Day (USA)
25 December Christmas Day
26 December Boxing Day

Moveable days

Easter
Chinese New Year
Orthodox Christmas and Easter
Jewish holidays – Passover, Yom Kippur, Chanukah
Diwali (Hindu)
Ramadan (Islamic)

Other dates/events/years which could spark some exhibition ideas:

International Museums' Day
Heritage Week
International Women's Day
Oktoberfest
Winter and Summer solstice
2001 International Year of the Volunteer
2002 Year of the Outback

You can build on the increased awareness your organisation will gain from holding a Centenary event by holding other events in the future and linking them to these themes.

Background resources

Some very useful websites have been developed specifically to support and promote the celebration of the Centenary of Australian Federation.

There are two sites which we highly recommend for background information on the history of Australian Federation. If you visit these sites, and explore the easy to follow links on each of them, we are sure you will be amazed at the wealth of images and information you will discover.

The recommended sites are:

National Library of Australia's Federation Gateway

<http://www.nla.gov.au/guides/federation/>

This gateway site has been created to assist you to locate a wide variety of materials (books, websites, pictures, manuscripts, etc.) relating to the Federation of Australia. Useful features of the site are:

- a chronology of the key dates leading up to Federation
- biographical information on the key people behind the Federation movement
- a guide to resources about Federation

If you click on the "Resources" button when you first enter this Gateway site, then click on the link to Pictorial, this will take you to the National Library's huge database of digitised images, IMAGE 1. A search on the word "Federation" will result in 240 "thumbnail" images, ranging from artworks like a wood engraving of the members of the Australian Federation Convention, to an image of a 1901 pewter medal to commemorate Federation. Copies of these images (as prints, slides or electronic images) can be ordered from the National Library. Information on prices for reproductions, and advice on copyright clearances required, are also easy to find on this website.

The Links section on this site is also full of information – taking you to other websites of relevance, such as a site developed to raise community awareness of the Australian Constitution (Constitutional Centenary Foundation) or Federation Images, a site at Monash University which contains a wide range of photographs, cartoons and newspaper excerpts from the Federation period in Australia.

Centenary of Federation Queensland – History pages

<http://www.cofq.qld.gov.au/history.html>

For Queenslanders, this would have to be the most useful resource for Queensland Federation facts.

The "History" pages are divided into five sections:

- the national story
- the Queensland story
- Other states (and territories established after 1901)
- Who was who
- Fed Ed – resources and opportunities for schools

"The Queensland story" provides an overview of the role of Queenslanders in the Federation of Australia and is supported by a decade by decade detailed timeline of significant Australian events from 1890 through to 1989, plus a full list of Queensland Premiers and Governors.

"Who was who" leads you to biographies of the key figures behind Federation, including the Queenslanders, Sir Samuel Griffith, Thomas McIlwraith, Sir James Dickson and John Murtagh Macrossan.

The "Fed Ed" section links you to additional Queensland history information, including regional history sites, genealogy and family trees, the Queensland Museum and a range of indigenous links.

Finally, the National Archives of Australia have recently launched a new website,

Documenting a democracy – Australia's story

(<http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au>)

Documenting a democracy is the result of a search across Australia and England to gather together Australia's founding documents – the "birth certificates" of our democracy.

This site enables you to view images of the pages of the original legal documents relating to Australia's nationhood (e.g. the Royal Commission of Assent to the Commonwealth of Australia, signed by Queen Victoria in 1900). It also contains extensive information about the history and significance of each document plus a "Picture Album" of significant historical images for each of the Australian states.

By clicking on a map of Queensland, you can access historical documents such as:

- the Letter patent erecting the colony of Queensland, 6 June 1859
- Constitution Act 1867 (Qld)
- Pacific Islanders Labourers Act Amendment Act 1884 (Qld)
- Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of Opium Act 1897 (Qld)

Or images like:

- the first governor of Queensland, Sir George Ferguson Bowen
- Pacific Islanders working at the Pioneer Sugar Company Plantation in the 1880s
- a cartoon from *The Worker* celebrating the abolition of the Queensland Upper House in 1921

The website also provides advice about who to contact to get copyright clearance if you wish to reuse any of the images on the site.

parttwo

DEVELOPING INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

by Kylie Winkworth



Introduction

Introduction

The Federation of the states into a single nation in 1901 was an exercise in imagining a new future for Australia. It grew from an extended debate about the possibilities of improving the relations between the States and the Australian people, or some of them. The arguments for Federation were based on analysing the past and present condition of the colonies, and seeing the opportunities to remake the relationships and operations of the country. The vision, concerns and essential optimism of these debates created the act of Federation. Rearranging the powers between the States and vesting new powers in the Commonwealth was a gesture of profound confidence in the future, and good faith between the parties.

The success of Federation underlines the capability of Australians to shape their future in ways that reflect the aspirations of its people. A hundred years later, with public debate so dominated by argument and complaints in the media, it is easy to lose confidence in our ability to make the future what we want it to be. But the Centenary of Federation and a new century provides Australia with similar opportunities to reconceptualise the idea of the nation, to review our achievements and identify ways of enhancing national well-being.

Museums have a very important role in this anniversary, as places for remembering the past, taking stock of the present and imagining the future. They are places where communities celebrate their achievements and retell stories of settlement, struggle and survival. But just as importantly, museums are also safe places for difficult debates, for being honest about the past as a foundation for building the future. In celebrating Federation museums have an obligation to canvas Australia's less savoury moments: dispossession of Indigenous people, paranoia about Chinese and non-European races, exploitation of Pacific Islanders, and damaging land management practices. This is not to dishonour the people, the time or their memory. Rather, it is a way for contemporary society to measure change and deal with the legacy of this history.

The second half of the twentieth century saw enormous growth in museums and collections all over Australia. Almost every town has a museum or heritage place, mostly powered by dedicated volunteers who provide an important service for the community and visitors. Museums, galleries and heritage places are prime attractions in the cities and towns of Australia, and they are often the lynchpin for local tourism activities, orienting visitors to the place and interpreting the history, character and identity of the region.

The Queensland Heritage Trails Network and other Centenary of Federation programs are funding important new attractions, museum projects and the conservation of heritage places. These programs recognise the potential of museums to play a dynamic role in the economic and cultural life of a community.

The purpose of this guide is to help communities participate in the Centenary of Federation, and plan events, exhibitions and activities that interact with the important themes for the nation at the turn of a new century. Six broad themes are the focus for Centenary of Federation celebrations in Queensland:

- Water;
- Land;
- Environment;
- Youth;
- Indigenous Australians; and
- Multiculturalism.

These themes are a framework for exploring local and national histories, helping to investigate the past and set a course for the future. As such they have a currency well beyond 2001. The aim is to help museums take stock of their collections and reinterpret them, to work with young people and diverse cultures in museums, and make museums fun, relevant and engaging.



Rethinking collections

The start of a new century is also an opportunity for museums to review the way they collect and interpret the history and people of their locality. It's a time to replace tired displays, forge new partnerships, and explore fresh angles on local and national history.

Museums shape ideas and perceptions about the past through their collections and exhibitions. They are recognised as authoritative places for interpreting local and national history. But most historical collections are the result of random acts of generosity, serendipity and the accumulation of unwanted and superfluous material goods. They are not planned to accurately reflect and document important historical themes and events. Most collections began without the guidance of a formal collection policy, and even after collection policies were put in place, collecting continues to be passive and reactive to offers of donation.

However as the costs of managing and caring for collections keeps rising, museums need to be more reflective of the legacy they are creating for future generations. Undocumented collections that lack specific stories, provenance, context and local associations will be a liability, not a legacy for the future. While the physical fabric of the object may survive the next hundred years, the inheritors of museum collections may not consider these objects significant, unless they can tell specific stories about people and places.

The challenge for the next century of museum collecting is to be more discriminating and strategic about what objects and stories we need to conserve for the future, that will leave a picture of our time and place. With overflowing storage areas, museums need to carefully consider which objects really need to be physically collected and conserved, and balance this against opportunities to document the material world in other forms. Photographs, film, newspapers, magazines, TV, and cyberspace all record the material life of our society. But which are the areas that these other information sources don't properly reflect? And what are the opportunities for museums to use their material culture skills to encourage the community to better record and conserve their objects? For example, there's a limit to how many items of agricultural machinery museums can acquire, but there is a need to document farmers at work, since so few of the objects survive with the stories of who owned them or photographs of them at work on the farm.

The community resources invested in maintaining collections in perpetuity means that they need to be more coherent and representative records of community life, and records that complement library and archive

collections as sources of information and insight about Australian life.

1.1 Collection policies

The collection policy is a public document that guides the development and management of a museum's collection. It specifies why, what, where, how and when the museum collects, and how and why items may be de-accessioned and disposed of.

The collection policy establishes an ethical framework for the museum's work with the collections. It is impossible for a museum to responsibly hold or develop collections unless there is a written, formally approved policy that is used in the day-to-day work of the museum.

The contents of a policy will vary depending on the type of museum. Some museums with *in situ* collections in heritage buildings have closed collection policies that specify no new acquisitions, but they still need a policy to manage the collection.

The contents of a Collection Policy:

- Purpose of the museum
- Background and history of the museum
- Significance of the collection, i.e. a review and an assessment of what you already have (see 1.7)
- Relationship between building and collection, especially if it's a heritage building
- Collection themes, scope and range of collecting
- Collection policies (see below)
- Collection acquisition criteria (i.e. how you decide whether to accept an item) – includes significance assessment and consideration of condition, provenance, duplication, etc.
- Documentation and acquisition policies - keeping good records
- Loans – in and out
- De-accessioning – how and why the museum disposes of objects from the collection
- Exhibition policies
- Strategic priorities for future collecting – linked to the strategic plan
- When the policy will be reviewed

The collection policies encompass some basic commitments and parameters for collecting, such as –

- Only collecting what can be properly stored and managed

- Only collecting provenanced objects
- Working co-operatively with other museums and collections to co-ordinate collecting
- Not collecting items where removal will diminish the significance of heritage sites
- Ensure collecting is consistent with the UNESCO Convention and Australia's movable heritage legislation
- Respect cultural and community attachment to collections
- Adopt Museums Australia policies for dealing with Indigenous communities and collections

1.2 Review and reassess the collection policy

Use the Centenary of Federation to reassess the significance of your collection and plan more strategic approaches to future collecting.

Hold a discussion in your museum about the future of the collection, its omissions, silences and priority areas for future growth. Better still, join with other museums in your region to critically review the collections and plan co-operative and complementary collecting.

- Assess the significance of the collection as a whole. See 1.6 for a template process for reviewing the significance of the collection.
- Review how well the collection interprets the history and identity of your area.
- Cross-check the scope of the collection against the important themes in the history of your area. Where are the omissions and duplications?
- Are the stories and associations of objects in the collection properly documented? This information – which is the key to the significance of the object – is very difficult to recover after the people who assembled the collection have died. Unfortunately, this is already happening in museums, and those who are left with the collections feel despondent about the anonymous objects deprived of their stories and associations.
- Set a goal to follow up the provenance and history of your most significant objects where donors can be traced.

If your collection is about local history, firmly resolve not to accept objects that do not have specific associations and connections to the district. Don't accept objects you don't want because the donor might give you things you really would like at a later date. The time and resources spent accessioning and storing unprovenanced and unwanted donations, is time not spent collecting or documenting more significant and strategic objects.

Revise the collection policy to include collecting priorities and strategies.

- Set some priority goals for each year and nominate people to develop each area.
- Advertise the museum's strategic priorities in the local paper and on radio.
- Build in opportunities for the community to contribute information, photographs and local stories.
- Include the collecting strategies in the museum's strategic plan.
- Exhibit the results of the strategic collecting drive each year. If the museum has no temporary exhibition space, talk to the council about using a local hall or the library or consider vacant shopfronts.

Resource

For more discussion of this subject see *The Future of Collecting in NSW*, Discussion Paper Series, Museums Australia, April 1996.

1.3 What's missing from your collection?

Consider the last 40 or 50 years and analyse how well the collection reflects the important events and daily life of the period. Does your museum give the impression that history stopped at World War II?

- What are the objects and information that won't be documented in other sources (such as newspapers, magazines, government records, and film), that should be collected by the museum to leave a fuller record of our time and place?
- Many objects that were once in common use are now rare because museums passively collected what was offered, instead of looking actively for objects that are more representative or distinctive to the area. In costume collections, for example, there are dozens of wedding dresses and christening robes but few examples of working clothes, knitting, darning, boots and slippers, sanitary towels and maternity dresses from the 1950s and 1960s.
- Imagine future curators are planning celebrations for the Bicentenary of Federation. Discuss what they will find in your collections about our time and place. What will they wish you'd collected or recorded? For example, material about reconciliation and contemporary Indigenous life; families coping with changing rural economies; itinerant workers in rural Australia, living in caravan parks; women at work on the land; Landcare, environment and alternative groups; multiculturalism in schools and at work; sporting clubs; information about teenagers, and children and their aspirations; unsung volunteers in

all kinds of community organisations; photographs of women and families at home – especially in the kitchen and laundry; and how the community experiences the Centenary of Federation.

Museums develop and hold collections in trust for future generations, so it is necessary to carefully scrutinise what kind of legacy is being compiled for the future. Ask the children of your community what kind of things they think should be in the museum to speak about their time and place. After all, they will be expected to take responsibility for the museums and collections assembled now, so the collections should reflect their ideas, concerns and culture. Ask them to paint, draw or write about their ideas and put the contributions on exhibition to stimulate community discussion. Select some entries for the museum's archives.

Building on the responses to these big questions, museums can develop strategic collecting and recording projects that will leave a picture of the community in 2001, and make a fascinating display. Interpreting community life today can change the image of the museum and build new partnerships with the community. Contemporary collecting and recording projects can also be structured as discreet and satisfying jobs to attract new skills and volunteers.

1.4 Celebrate community volunteers

Volunteering is one area of community life that is not well-documented in other sources and archives. In particular, the contribution of generations of women to a

network of community organisations is not recognised in official histories and archives. Volunteers are some of the most inspiring people in the community and their stories will make a compelling exhibition. As 2001 is the Year of the Volunteer, consider an exhibition and documentation project to celebrate the work and contribution of volunteers in your community.

- Look at the collections – perhaps you already have images and objects associated with volunteers in the war, for example, photographs of the Red Cross or women's guilds knitting socks and rolling bandages.
- Contact community and volunteer associations – many will have records and collections that you can help them document and look after – Country Women's Association, Legacy, church and charitable groups, Lions Club, Rotary, Apex, Bush Fire Brigade, Meals on Wheels, hospital auxiliaries, the Parents' & Citizens' Association, school tuck shops, sporting clubs, arts and cultural groups, and Landcare.
- Ask each group to nominate how they would like to be represented – don't forget the museum volunteers either.
- Engage a local photographer to record volunteers at work in the community.
- If your Council doesn't have a Volunteer of the Year program, consider initiating an annual award.
- Follow the templates in Part 3 to organise the opening night. See if your Council will host a community picnic or barbecue to say thank-you to the volunteers.

Case Study 1.5 Alternatives to collecting – collecting the stories

National Quilt Search

The National Quilt Search is a national women's history project initiated by the Pioneer Women's Hut of Tumbarumba in New South Wales. It is based on the recognition that the meaning and significance of quilts lies in their provenance, context and associations with the women who made them. The aim is to identify and document quilts in public and family collections all over Australia, recording the women's stories and domestic life, and helping museums and families to recognise their value. It is not a collecting exercise but a way of celebrating the stories of ordinary women and their objects. Advice is available to help families look after their quilts. Each quilt, from the

humble to the beautifully sewn, is registered on a survey form that asks for details of the quilt's history, the maker and her life, and the house where it was made. Photographs of the women and their houses are borrowed for copying. The register has documented over a thousand quilts and is now accessible on Australian Museums On Line (AMOL) – go to <http://amol.org.au/nqr>. The Quilt Search is uncovering hundreds of stories about women's lives, stories of everyday family life, of struggle and "making do". It is helping us to gain a better understanding of Australia's quilt heritage and the part quilts played in family life.



Quilts can interpret a family's textile history if the stories of the garments and fabrics are recorded. Here Nancy Stinson of Coolaman, NSW, looks at the filling of a quilt made from recycled woollen clothes. The pink fabric is from a dress she wore when she was four years old.

Image courtesy Nancy Stinson and the National Quilt Register

1.5 Alternatives to collecting – collecting the stories

Storage space in every museum is very limited and collections are expensive to assemble and manage. Many objects are best looked after in their family context or *in situ* where they have most meaning and significance. Objects don't have to be in a museum to be well cared for. Museums can use their skills with collections to help families and communities document and look after their significant objects and keep them in their context of use or association.

Resources

For another non-collecting project see *The Lions of Retreat Street: A Chinese Temple in Inner Sydney*, Ann Stephen (Ed), Powerhouse Publishing, 1997.

Gregor McCaskie, 'The Non-Collection Policy', *ARTEFACT*, The Magazine of Museums Australia (Qld), Vol 5, No 3, September 2000.

1.6 Step-by-step outline to assess and review the significance of the museum's collection

When developing a collection policy or revising an existing one, it is important to take stock of the significance of your collection, and review its history, important themes and its links to the development of the museum. The assessment helps the museum to understand the strengths and weaknesses in the collection, and fine-tune collecting directions and priorities.

The few paragraphs or pages about the collection, its evolution and significant items, can be used in many other contexts: for disaster preparedness, display texts, publications and brochures. Assessing the significance of your collection as a whole is essentially the same process used for assessing the significance of individual objects. It can be undertaken as a detailed research project, or a survey from existing knowledge. You may not want to do all the things listed below, it will depend on your museum and resources.

Step 1

Collate the collection's records and the museum's archives. Research the history of the collection and museum. Many established museums and historical societies already have a published history, but it may not be well-related to the development of the collection. Identify the main themes and collection interests, the acquisition of important objects or collections, and events in the museum's history that have impacted on the collection and its display, such as new buildings or extensions. Many collections will demonstrate aspects of the changing history of museums, and sometimes this is

the case for displays as well. You may be surprised at what your examination of the collection reveals about your museum.

Step 2

Talk with previous office bearers, volunteers or staff about the significant acquisitions and collection development, and also previous donors and community interest groups. Consider the community's relationship with the museum and sense of attachment to the collection. Are there important objects or themes in the museum that the community feel strongly about? What role does the museum have in your town? Have there been times when the community has rallied to support the museum? This is important in considering the social value of the collection.

Step 3

Understand the collection in the context of its building, especially if there are collections associated with the place, such as original furniture or equipment. Are there objects associated with the museum's history, or the building, that should be accessioned? Also consider how the collection reflects the history and identity of the people and the region, or interest groups associated with the museum.

Step 4

Analyse the overall condition of the collection. This can help to set future conservation priorities.

Step 5

Consider how your collection compares with other museum collections in the region, or collections of similar size or interest.

Step 6

Assess its significance with reference to the main criteria (i.e. historic, aesthetic, scientific and social values) and comparative criteria (i.e. rarity, representativeness, condition, provenance and interpretive ability).

Step 7

Write a statement of significance that summarises the importance and meaning of the collection. This may be a paragraph or run to a page or two. Dot points are fine if there's no time for perfect prose.

Step 8

Identify strategies to redress weaknesses and omissions in the collection and plan ways to make collecting less passive. Explore opportunities to collaborate with other museums to build complementary collections.

Resource

From *Significance – A Guide for Assessing the Significance of Cultural Heritage Objects and Collections*, Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, Heritage Collections Council and Department of Communication,

1.7 Step-by-step outline for thematic studies

Another way to review collections is to focus on a particular theme, industry, region or subject, and look at all the collections associated with it, either within the museum or in partnership with other museums and the community. This process builds knowledge about the subject area, the objects and their needs. It identifies the most significant items and underpins strategic collecting and exhibitions.

Almost any collection area or theme can be surveyed in this way: dairying, agricultural collections, printing, schooling, communications, transport, health and medicine, timber-getting, sugar, multiculturalism, Australia at war, etc. Use this methodology with some of the project ideas in Part 2 – Section B.

Step 1

Using this outline, develop a brief with a clearly stated rationale, aims, outcomes and method. Identify a project co-ordinator and work out the way the study will be undertaken: budget, time frame, process, etc.

Step 2

Call together museums, historical societies and other interested community groups and individuals to discuss the project, plan work and share information, agree on aims, etc.

Step 3

Commission a contextual history by a local historian. The history should be illustrated with objects, photographs, maps, people stories and excerpts from original source material. Identify key themes in the history as a framework for the assessment of movable items. Try to cast the themes as active words or processes. In addition, you may also want to draw up a checklist of the main categories or types of objects likely to be encountered.

Step 4

Promote the project through a variety of means. Use the publicity to raise awareness of your work and identify movable heritage in family and private collections, if this is within the scope of your study.

Step 5

Survey movable items to identify the most significant objects and collections and compile a database. Use the themes and checklist to search out the less obvious objects and stories. Use a survey sheet to collect information about the objects and put them on a database.

Step 6

Upgrade the documentation of the most significant objects and, where possible, undertake further research on the history and provenance of the items.

Step 7

Assess the significance of individual items and groups of items and collections. Assess the objects against the identified themes to consider the scope and representativeness of movable heritage items and collections.

Step 8

Revise the history to include the significant objects, incorporating the knowledge developed through the collection survey. Consider putting the revised illustrated history on exhibition and call for public comments.

Step 9

Publish and promote the work - on Australian Museums On Line (AMOL), in newspapers, exhibitions, a catalogue, postcards, a CD, and in developing driving tours, etc. It's a good idea to do a hard copy publication of the work.

Step 10

Hold a meeting to look at the results of the survey and discuss recommendations. Summarise the work and develop policies, strategies and recommendations to aid the conservation and interpretation of movable heritage items and raise awareness of their significance. This might include –

- A policy framework for the thematic area, to be adopted by participating museums. The policies might include recording collections or objects in situ, coordinating collecting with other museums, joint strategies to address neglected collection themes, etc.
- Conservation support and funding for significant objects
- Strategic collecting of neglected themes or priority areas
- Revised collection policies
- Improved interpretation and new displays
- Linked exhibitions and driving tours to encourage exploration of the region
- Grant applications to fund further work recommended by the study
- A strategic plan for the collecting, conservation and interpretation of the theme or subject area.

Resource

For more advice about thematic analysis of collections, see Kylie Winkworth, *Connecting Collections, Thematic Studies of Museum and Heritage Collections, A Guide for Communities*, Queensland Heritage Trails Network, 2001.

2 *Interpreting collections*

2.1 Why interpretation is essential

Interpretation means all of the ways that museums communicate the meaning of their objects and collections, enabling visitors to understand their significance. The term originated in the national parks movement in the United States, and the concept strongly emphasises active engagement and the discovery of ideas, relationships and understanding of why the object is important.

Interpretation is not about the delivery of knowledge and information. It is not a statement of facts. It is a communication process that helps people relate to the object or place, and discover meaning and relationships. So interpretation engages not just the mind but the emotions, senses and imagination.

In some ways interpretation is inherent in all museum processes and decisions from collecting, cataloguing, conservation, exhibition, publications, public programs, online access, education programs and hands-on activities. All of these activities entail synthesising information, understanding significance and undertaking work that will retain, conserve, communicate and enable visitors to engage with the meaning of the object.

In the past museums simply exhibited objects, with or without simple labels that stated the maker, origin and material of the object. Some museums still do little more than this. However this style of presentation assumes a degree of knowledge and education about the context and use of the object that the visitor often lacks, and it leaves the viewer to deduce, if they can, why the object is important and why it is in a museum.

However for many visitors this doesn't work anymore, as they may have little or no knowledge of the function, context and significance of even very familiar objects. Younger visitors may know what a sewing machine is, but bring no direct knowledge or memories of its use and place within the home. The same goes for ice chests, dairying equipment, laundry technology, timber tools, Furphy water carts and agricultural machinery. Many museums have a blacksmith's shop in the collection, and demonstrations of the blacksmith at work fascinate visitors, but museums rarely explain exactly why the blacksmith was important, and few museums actually name the blacksmith or give any idea of his working life, where the shop was located, or his skills and the range of goods he produced.

In the 21st century, as familiarity with these objects recedes, museums will have to work harder to interpret their collections. They will need to provide more contextual information to allow visitors to understand

and engage with the object. To do this, museums need to investigate and analyse the significance of the object or collection, and ensure that its history and context is well-documented.

Have a critical look at how you use the collection and how it is displayed. Does your museum look like an antique shop without the price tags? Are you just warehousing objects instead of focussing on interpretation to help visitors understand their meaning and significance?

2.2 Assessing significance

The purpose of interpretation is to communicate the significance of the object or place. Assessing significance is the starting point for planning interpretation of an object, collection theme or heritage place.

Assessing significance is a process of investigating and analysing the meaning and importance of objects. It draws on all the elements that contribute to meaning, including context, provenance, related places, the donor's memories, and comparative knowledge of similar objects. It goes one step further than a conventional catalogue description to explain why and how the object is important and what it means. Assessing significance helps to place the object in its historical and functional context. The results of the analysis are synthesised in a *statement of significance*. This is a readable summary of the values, meaning and importance of the object.

The significance of objects should be assessed at the point of acquisition, and before conservation work, or exhibitions are undertaken or planned. The statement of significance can be used as an exhibition label. Using significance as the basis for interpretation helps museums avoid the trap of just stating what the object is, rather than making its meaning understandable and accessible.

The meaning of objects can change over time, as our interests shift and knowledge about the subject grows. Significance assessment plots these changes and helps focus interpretation on the object's important qualities and changing meanings. Significance is one of the building blocks of an exhibition, constructing meaning and storylines from objects, based on research and analysis.

2.3 Step-by-step outline for assessing significance

Step 1

Compile a file containing all details about the object and its history. This may include donor details and notes made at the time the object was acquired, the date of

acquisition, photographs, copies of reference material and related objects in the collection.

Step 2

Research the history and provenance of the object, including photographs of it in use, notes about the owner or the place where it was used, when it was purchased or made, as well as the general history of this type of item.

Step 3

Talk with donors, owners, users and relevant community associations to ensure the context, provenance and potential social values are fully understood. Encourage the donor to write you some notes about the history and meaning of the object when it was in use. Other people in the community may also have useful information about the actual object or similar items.

Step 4

Understand the context of the object. Consider its relationship with other objects, the place where it was used, the locality and how it relates to the history and geography of the area. Wherever possible photograph and record the object or collection in its context of use or original location.

Step 5

Analyse and record the fabric of the item – how it works, its manufacture, patterns of wear, repairs and adaptations. Record the condition of the object. This step may be part of your cataloguing procedures.

Step 6

Consider comparative examples of similar objects. Australian Museums On Line (AMOL) may list other similar objects. Look in reference books and consult with colleagues and other museums with related collections.

Step 7

Assess significance against the main criteria – historic, aesthetic, scientific and social values. Determine the degree of significance by assessing against the comparative criteria: rarity, representativeness, condition, provenance and interpretive ability.

Step 8

Write a succinct statement of significance encapsulating the object's values as expressed through the criteria.

Check all future uses or works to the object against the statement of significance. Regularly review the significance assessment as circumstances change and knowledge develops.

Resource

From *Significance – A guide for assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*, Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, for the Heritage

Case Study

Man's shirt, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Abbreviated catalogue description: A man's square cut work shirt, c. 1800-1850, of thin, cream plain woven cotton, with stand collar, slit opening and tie at neck, the body of the shirt sewn selvedge to selvedge, the sleeves straight set into the body, with underarm gussets and simple cuffs lacking buttons or button holes. All hand sewn. Acquired from a donor with a family collection in Toongabbie, Sydney, but lacking a specific provenance.

Statement of significance: A man's work shirt, pre-1850, the square cut pattern and construction is typical of 18th and early 19th century shirts, but this example is simplified to its most basic elements. Although unprovenanced, this shirt is a very rare survivor of one of the most common garments of the 19th century. Through the late 18th and early 19th century the shirt was in transition from undergarment to more visible outer wear, with the front becoming more detailed and the cut more tailored. Working men might also wear a shirt to bed. The simple cut, poor quality fabric and tie fastening at the neck points up this transition and possible multiple use. If the shirt was a defining statement of class and occupation in the 19th century, this example ranks at the bottom of the scale. The rarity and simplicity of this shirt makes it a significant example and comparative piece for other shirts, including the better quality convict's shirt recovered from the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney, and more elaborate gentlemen's dress shirts.

From *significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*, Heritage Collections Council, 2001.



*Man's cream cotton work shirt, late 18th–early 19th C.
Photo courtesy of the Powerhouse Museum Collection.*

2.4 Interpreting everyday objects: Finding the meaning

Irons, sewing machines, telephones, typewriters, smoking equipment, meat safes, ice chests, cruet sets, axes, saws, tools, lamps, clocks, meat plates, dairy equipment, toilet sets, kitchen scales, bicycles ...

These objects are found in museums all over Australia, but they are rarely interpreted. We all recognise what they are. We don't even need to put a label on them. They were commonplace in homes everywhere, but being common doesn't mean they're not important. Many of these items were essential tools, a part of family life or innovations that dramatically changed the lives of those who used them.

It is easy to take for granted the meaning of everyday objects, but do museum visitors really understand why they were important and how they were used? The challenge for museums is to recover the meaning of these objects, and to find new ways of arousing visitors' curiosity about them. Displaying them in a row or a cluster of similar items is only one of many ways to interpret them. As the living memory of using these objects recedes, visitors need help to understand their context, meaning and patterns of use.

Use these questions as a guide to help reinterpret familiar objects and rediscover the meaning of objects we take for granted.

Common questions for everyday objects: flat irons

Use the answers to these questions to get to the meaning of irons and to help reshape your iron display.

What work did it do?

Why was it needed?

Why was it useful or important?

The flat iron was used to press clothes and household linen, making them more comfortable to wear. With starched garments, the glossy finish made by the iron meant the garment stayed cleaner as grime didn't adhere as readily to the polished surface of the fabric. Clean glossy linen was also a sign of wealth and social status. Irons were important for many reasons. Ironing was a major part of domestic work and the washing process, it was work that was shared by almost all women. The iron symbolises the hard labour of domestic life without mods. Keeping the family's clothes and linen ironed showed a woman's determination to maintain standards. Taking in ironing was one way for women to earn a meagre living.

How was the object used?

What steps are involved in using the object?

First, clean and organise the working space, light the fire, clean the irons, heat the irons, clean and polish the hot iron, test the temperature, press and fold the garment. One hot flat iron lasted for one shirt.

What other tools, objects or equipment was it used with?

What skills were needed to use the object?

Tools include – a table or board covered by a blanket and clean sheet, a trivet for the hot iron, a cloth for polishing the irons, a roll of fabric to insulate the handle, spare cloth for testing the temperature, a dampening bottle, a clothes horse, equipment for starching such as a bowl and box of starch or mixture. It took considerable skill and experience to starch and iron a great variety of garments and fabrics.

Where was the object used?

What space, room or building was it used in?

In most small or medium houses, the ironing was done in the kitchen, close to the stove and in good light. Larger houses might have a specialised laundry with separate spaces for washing and for ironing. Ironing was not done near the copper or wet area.

Who used the object?

If the actual owner is not known, who generally used or owned such objects?

Unfortunately few museums have recorded who used their irons and how. Generally, ironing was done by women, both as unpaid work for the family and as paid labour on stations, in commercial laundries and working from home. Ironing is one of the few tasks shared by women of all classes. Even women with servants might iron more delicate garments themselves.

When did it stop being used and why?

What can you say about the design of the object?

How has it changed or stayed the same?

Museums need to do more research to find out when women moved from flat irons to other types. The basic shape, function and labour have remained much the same, but power sources have changed.

The Meaning of Flat Irons

Museum people often joke about irons as the epitome of the boring museum object, but why? It is true they are common in museum collections. Almost every family owned two or three flat irons of different sizes. They were given to museums not just because they were redundant and had little monetary value. For some donors, flat irons are a symbol of pioneer life, evoking the unrelenting

grind of domestic work before electricity. Celebrating the skill and hard work of ironing is a way of honouring the women who used them.

These days many people have abandoned ironing altogether, liberated by synthetics and easy care fabrics. For some this represents escape from a boring, repetitive chore. But there are many other points of view about ironing then and now and museums can use their collections to record visitors' responses. A flat iron can be a focus for powerful childhood memories. Ironing could be a quiet time to talk with mother. Focussing on ironing helps recover memories of family and domestic life.

One of the challenges for museums is to move beyond the typology of irons and show ironing as an activity and a work process. The workspace was carefully prepared, there were specialised irons for different tasks and fabrics, there was a precise order as to which clothes were ironed first, and there might be other work going on at the same time such as minding the baby and getting dinner. The meaning of irons is only partly in their design and power source, so museum displays need to take us beyond the look of the object to the work that it did.

Liven up the Iron Display

Look for a local angle. Ask people in your town to write down their memories of ironing. Seek information to try and document when flat irons were last used in your area. Organise to take photographs of some local women doing their ironing at home. Ask them to write down their ironing memories. Ask the men too.



Aboriginal woman ironing on Kaleno Station, courtesy The Great Cobar Heritage Centre, c.1900. The following advice almost exactly describes her working arrangements.

Ironing is a process that should not be interrupted. To this end, a strong, clear fire and a good supply of irons are necessary. The face of the iron must be quite smooth and clean, or the starch will catch and cling to it, and the appearance of the clothes be spoiled. A large table or ironing board must be placed in a good light, and on it the ironing blanket, a stout woollen cloth, folded twice or thrice to give thickness; over this again the ironing sheet is spread, and firmly fastened at the corners. At the right hand corner is placed the iron stand ... The clothes horse should form a fire screen for the ironer ...

A Manual of Domestic Economy, Jane Stoker, c.1880.

Ask someone who remembers ironing with flat irons to give you a demonstration. Photograph the process and write captions to describe each stage of the work. Use this in a revamped display.

Rearrange the museum's display of irons. Organise an ironing display in a kitchen setting, with just a few irons but all the other equipment and accessories, such as an ironing blanket and sheet, a board or table, a trivet to stand the hot iron on, a clothes horse, a pile of ironed clothes, a pile waiting to be ironed, a damping bottle, a cloth to wipe the irons when they come off the stove, a padded roll for holding the hot iron, a bowl and other materials for starching, etc.

Have an iron that people can pick up to see how heavy it is. Have an example of a starched shirt for visitors to touch.

Find out how long it would take to iron an average family's linen with flat irons. Estimate how many shirts a mother might iron in her lifetime. If all the shirts were stacked together how tall would this be?

Have a pin-up board or folder near the display and seek comments from visitors about irons and ironing, ask them for their memories of their mother ironing. Why not let visitors sit down in the ironing display to record their memories?

Help visitors to measure change between then and now, looking at how irons have changed, and how they've stayed the same. (Same form and function, different power sources.)

Remember the smell of freshly ironed linen and try to get it into your display. Or ask visitors to remember it.

Draw attention to the skill of ironing without a temperature control. Have a burn mark in an old sheet as a reminder. Seek comments from visitors about the introduction of synthetic fabrics and how many were scorched or melted.

Add photographs of women ironing and quotes about ironing from household advice books. Draw on these quotes for the labels to get different voices into the display. Also use quotes from housekeeping advice books to underline the skills required for ironing.

To be able to iron properly requires much practice and experience. Strict cleanliness must be observed, and, if this is not the case, the most expert ironer will not be able to make her things look clean and free from smears.

From Duties of the Laundry Maid, in Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management.

Make sure your display evokes the order and cleanliness necessary for ironing.

Hold a Mother's Day event at the museum to collect and share ironing stories, and to honour women's hard work in the home.

Resources

Mrs Beeton *Book of Household Management*, various editions since 1859.

Margaret Knowlden, *Strike Before the Iron is Hot*, Little Red Apple Publishing, 2001.

Pamela Sambrook, *Laundry Bygones*, Shire Album 107, Shire Publications, 1983.

There are many web sites devoted to irons – www.irons.com and www.ironstalk.com are just two.

2.5 Telling stories

At its simplest level significance is a way of telling stories about objects – true stories that capture visitors' attention and remain in their memories long after they've left the museum.

Telling stories is an essential part of being human. We tell stories to make sense of the world and our place in it, to record history, to find meaning in experience, to teach lessons and to carry beliefs and culture. Stories fire our imagination, our faith and keep us entranced and entertained, whether they're the Dreamtime stories of Aboriginal people, the Bible, Shakespeare, Hollywood movies or airport fiction.

Stories and experiences are embodied in objects in very particular ways. Objects stimulate memories; they resurrect lost spaces and family events. Like particular smells, they can vividly evoke the time, place and person who used the object, creating a ripple of memories and associations. They are very powerful tools for museums to engage visitors. Objects with stories are important connectors between people and places, pointing to the world outside the museum and outlining a web of relationships in the history and geography of the town.

Provenance and context are the keys to telling stories through objects, and constructing meaning in displays. Provenance means the life story of an object. It can take many forms: a chain of ownership or descent through a family; a record of sales and purchase prices; an excavation record for an archaeological artefact; or contextual material, photographs and recollections of the object in use. Provenance enhances the significance of an object and helps guarantee its authenticity. Provenanced objects are reference points for further research, analysis and comparison with undocumented objects.

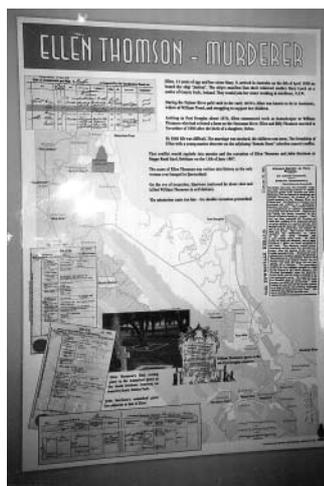
If there is no provenance for the object, it is hard to draw specific conclusions or make exact inferences about patterns of use. In the past, most museums collected objects without recording or writing down the provenance and stories related by the donor. It's only in the last two decades that museums have recognised the importance of provenance as a research tool and reference point for telling stories through objects. The

challenge for museums now is to try and recover some of these lost or nearly forgotten stories that are central to the significance of the object. Sometimes this can be as easy as getting out the phone book. Museums in smaller communities are more able to do this important work as many donors or their families still live in the district.

Identify your most significant objects and try to recover more information about their history, context and donor. Many families will have photographs of the owner and place where the object was used. These are invaluable in displays.

When recording provenance try to encourage the donor to write down the stories and associations of the object and why it is significant to them. The way a donor describes this meaning is itself significant, and direct quotes from these notes make for more lively and interesting museum labels. Photographs also have provenance and where possible donors should be asked to write down all they know about the content, place, time and circumstances in which the photograph was taken.

Identify three or four objects in the museum that tell stories about local people, events, places and activities. Make these the focus of a specific display and promote the museum by highlighting the stories.



A museum with a story – Ellen Thomson, the only woman ever hanged in Queensland – Port Douglas Court House Museum

Image Courtesy Port Douglas Court House Museum

Museums interpret object stories in many ways:

- It can be as simple as putting the item on display with a long label.
- The object's story can be told through video and oral history. (Focussing oral histories on objects rather than general topics makes for more vivid and concise accounts.)
- An exhibition is an extended story told through objects.
- Guided tours can very directly communicate object stories, but you also need to cater for visitors who won't take a tour.
- Education and public programs may be based on object stories.

- Newspapers and talkback radio are great vehicles for object stories.
- Encourage parents and grandparents to tell object stories to their children and grandchildren by creating occasions for them to share memories.
- Collaborate with other museums to plan a serial exhibition in multiple locations.
- Interpret object stories outside the museum. Put the object back in its context (metaphorically) through signage and public art commissions.

Start a community conversation around objects, enabling people to share object stories. You can do this through talkback radio, newspapers, pin-up boards, comment books and morning teas. This is a good way to do object research. Almost any type of object, collection or theme might be discussed: “making do”, glory boxes, wedding presents, delivery carts, shopping, butter-making, the home front during war, and picnics.

For most local history collections the community is a fount of information not found in books. Ask the community to look for objects with stories about local people, families and places. Organise a temporary display and ask lenders to write down the story as an object label. Have it open over a weekend, or have a rotating display, perhaps a showcase with a series of borrowed objects and their stories.

2.6 *Project ideas – interpreting what’s distinctive about your locality*

In the past, many museums acquired objects as examples of technology, and arranged them in typologies of similar items: typewriters, tractors, telephones, clocks, etc. The emphasis was on completing the sequence and showing changes in design and technology, rather than the particular history of each item. For many of these objects it is not possible to recover their provenance, but there are ways of refocussing the displays to anchor the interpretation in a local story. More contextual interpretation, through photographs, models, props, local folklore and references to the places outside the museum, all help to differentiate your displays from those in other museums with similar collections.

Rather than just exhibiting unrelated objects, museums are now refocussing their displays to explore the character and identity of the town and district, to evoke a sense of place, and highlight for visitors and locals what is special and distinctive in its history and geography. Many museums now aim to be an orientation point for visitors and locals. They interpret the natural and cultural history of their region and help visitors to discover the heritage of the area.

Investigating the character and identity of your area can

be an enjoyable community activity. It gets people to see their everyday world with new eyes, and the museum generates ideas and interest in its displays. Find some other partners to help you run the project, perhaps the council, the National Trust, history teachers and environmental groups. Here are some suggestions:

- Distinctive Features of Our Town – hold an event where people are asked to bring things that they think characterise the locality and its land and environment, as represented in objects, botanical and mineral specimens, quotes, poems, people, models or photographs or almost anything. You can have humorous prizes and create an impromptu exhibition of the results.
- Made in ... [Your Town] – hold an event where people are asked to bring any object with the name of your town on it. It could be a flour bag, a letterhead, newspaper, souvenir or postcard, pickle jar, or manufactured item. Ask the participants to write a caption for their object and hold a short exhibition of the collection. You can add objects from the museum’s collection to the display, but you will find things that should be in the collection. Photograph and document the collection before it is returned to the owners. Gather some lucky door prizes to encourage participation.
- Turning Points – run a newspaper column about life-changing events in the history of your town, and ask people to write in with their suggestions and say how they think it changed the town, for example, fire and flood, piped water, the advent of the railway, electricity, a mineral discovery, new industries, a sealed road, passenger aircraft, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, electricity. Alternatively, organise with a local school for students to interview a number of older people in your area. Work up a short questionnaire as the basis of the interview. Questions could include the most important inventions or changes in the 20th century, (you could have an indicative list); the best changes in the town in their lifetime; their favourite labour-saving appliance; their worst fashion memories; or their favourite clothes. Use the results as the basis for an exhibition during Senior’s Week.

2.7 *Interpreting objects through themes*

Rather than showing rows of similar objects or having everything on display like an antique shop, themes can be used to revamp displays and help visitors understand the context and significance of familiar and unfamiliar objects.

Themes help structure exhibitions and focus interpretation on the meaning of the objects. They point to the broader context, function and associations of objects and build a story about why the object is important. Every object can be interpreted through its

related themes, with a range of interpretive strategies from simple photographs and text to furnished settings and models. To find the themes just think about the context of use, history and significance of the object. Try to couch themes as activities or processes, this helps to develop a storyline around the object. For example:

Object	Theme
Electrical appliances	the coming of electricity
Meat plate	eating meat
Cruet set	Sunday lunch, or the rituals of the dinner table
Tea cups and tray cloths	afternoon tea, visiting
Telephones	keeping in touch, conversations
Quilts	keeping warm
Coolgardie safe	keeping food cool
Irons	caring for clothes
Tractors	working the farm, ploughing
Bicycles	getting about

2.8 Interpreting moved buildings

Many museums use relocated historic buildings to exhibit collections and create period settings. However, these buildings have their own stories about their owners, function and original locations and these are of great interest to visitors. Sometimes the fiction of the recreated period display overwhelms the building, and obscures the authentic story of the place. If the building was documented in its original context, and if you know about its history, consider reinterpreting the building as you would an object in the collection. The building doesn't have to be fully furnished with period settings. Empty spaces can be more evocative than cluttered displays.

- Assess the significance of the building and understand its heritage values.
- Use significance as the reference point for the interpretation.
- Identify the important stories of the place and focus on these.
- Help visitors understand the original context and siting of the building, such as what views were seen from the windows, what were its water sources and where were its outbuildings.
- Interpret the story of how and why the building was moved – this can be a simple album of photographs or an interpretive panel.

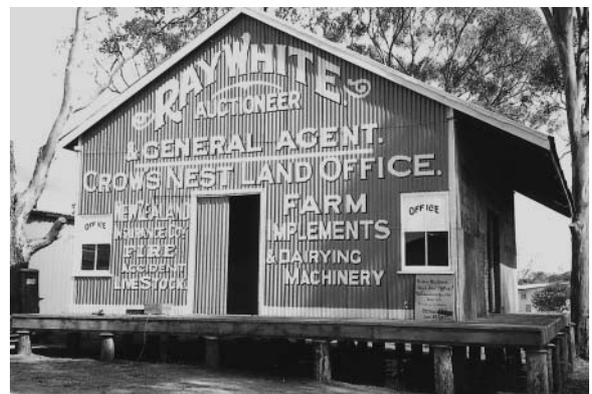
- Interpret the history of the building evident in its fabric – windows, fragments of wall paper, nails where clothes and pictures were hung, etc.
- Manage and interpret the building as a museum object, not a vacant set.
- Provide somewhere for visitors to sit to absorb the atmosphere of the building.
- Accession the building into the collection and conserve its original fabric.
- Focus on the original fabric and keep any introduced displays very simple.
- If the building has survived with any of its fittings or contents avoid confusing visitors by including extraneous objects. Moved buildings that retain associated contents or collections are generally more significant.
- Consider using sound (ambient noise, rather than oral history) to evoke the people and life of the building – for example, if the building is an old school house, the distant sound of children playing.

Case Study

Ray White Real Estate Office, c1900

Carbethon Folk Museum and Pioneer Village, Crows Nest

This is the office for land agent Ray White's first real estate business. It is significant for its links to the development and subdivision of the Crows Nest area and it has a story to tell about the transformation of the landscape from farming to housing. The Museum has built a positive relationship with the original family and the Ray White Real Estate business, increasing support for the Museum and keeping the interpretation focussed on the authentic stories of the Ray White Real Estate Office.



Ray White Real Estate Office, c1900

Image Courtesy Carbethon Folk Museum and Pioneer Village, Crows Nest



3 Planning displays

Exhibitions are not fixed forever, or they shouldn't be. Organic objects such as textiles, paper and ivory deteriorate if left on permanent exhibition, but there are other good reasons to rotate displays. Redoing displays keeps the museum fresh. New displays create a buzz around the museum. They keep it in the public eye and draw return visitors from the local community. Regularly changing displays and revitalising the interpretation is an essential benchmark of a good museum.

Most museums now try to have a space where they can show temporary exhibitions, topical responses to contemporary events and new acquisitions. Seasonal activities are good subjects for temporary displays, such as Christmas, summer holidays, harvesting, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. Anzac Day is an important anniversary for the museum to commemorate. Museums can build community support by responding to topical events and issues. Ask the community what exhibitions and displays they would like to see, and think about the questions visitors ask as a starting point for new displays.

Museum displays don't have to be in the museum. If you've run out of space, consider a small display in the library, council foyer, vacant shop fronts, and places where people queue. Use your exhibitions to reach out to new audiences and interest groups.

There are some simple steps to build successful exhibitions. These are essentially the same whether you're planning a blockbuster travelling exhibition or a single showcase in your museum or local library.

Most exhibitions fall into three main stages:

Step 1: Concept Development

This involves getting the basic ideas together, answering "why", "what", "who", "when", "where" and "how" about the exhibition. Compile all this information into a concept document. Include photographs of objects, images and quotes to give the flavour of the exhibition.

Step 2: Content Development

This means research, refining the storyline, working out the structure of the exhibition with images, objects and display ideas. Document and collate all this information into a loose leaf folder to create the exhibition brief. This is the blueprint for the detailed development of every facet of the exhibition.

Stage 3: Production and Installation

Work includes finalising text, images, captions, design, display fabrication and installation, using the exhibition brief as a guide.

3.1 Step-by-step outline or template for preparing displays and exhibitions

This simple outline can work for very small historical displays or complex travelling exhibitions, adjusting the steps to suit the content and scale of your display.

Stage 1 – Concept development

- Develop the concept and storyline: roughly block in what the exhibition is about and how you will tell the story. What is the mood of the display? What are the key themes, stories and objects?
- Define the aims of the exhibition. Why are you doing this exhibition, what is the rationale for choosing this subject, what do you hope to achieve and what do you want to say about the subject or theme?
- Who is the audience? Don't assume there's a general all-purpose audience. Define the range of people you want to come, so you can address their needs in the exhibition planning and promotion. Make sure there are things for children to do and elements in the show that will appeal to them.
- Using the list below, develop a schedule of all the tasks leading up to the exhibition opening and identify who will do what tasks. Estimate how long the stages will take with the resources you have.
- Identify possible partners and stakeholders with an interest in your exhibition theme. Identify what resources you have to do the work: budget, people, skills, objects and images, etc. Build the storyline around your key strengths and resources, for example, the collection, people stories, historic photographs.
- Identify the location and duration of the exhibition. How much space is there? Make a floor plan of the space, the location of power points and the dimensions of the showcases.
- Will you do a catalogue or publication?

Put all this information together in a concept document. This helps explain what you want to do to funding bodies and community partners; it keeps you focussed on the primary aims of the project and it can be part of a grant application. Include some primary sources, images and photographs of objects that help give the flavour of the exhibition.

The concept document is the basis for an exhibition brief (see below). It sketches the story you want to tell, why it needs to be told and how you intend to do it. However, if you're doing a very small display, say a few panels and showcases, there is no need for a separate concept



document and exhibition brief, just compile a single concept outline/brief.

Stage 2 – Content development and exhibition brief

- Work out a storyline for the exhibition or display, using the concept document as a reference point, and with further research and work on the collection. How will the content be structured? Will it be chronological, thematic, materials-based, or a mix of elements?
- Break the storyline down into themes or components; it might be a showcase, an interpretive panel or contextual display. Like any good narrative, try to include changes of mood and tone, poignant moments and triumphs. Is there any opportunity for humour? What is the mood of the display? This helps guide the design and choice of colours and finishes.
- Number the sections of the storyline; this helps to keep tabs on photographs and captions. Relate this structure to the circulation path through the exhibition space. Is there a beginning and an end? Does the exhibition have to be viewed in a particular sequence? Does it fit in the space? Sometimes it can be useful to make a model of the space and the key exhibits.
- For each section of the exhibition identify what the aim of the section is, what do you want to communicate through this element of the display and what media, objects and techniques you will use to do it? This is a reality check to keep you focussed on the simple ideas that objects can communicate.
- Research the history and themes. Where possible, involve the community by seeking information, loans, donations, images and leads. This also helps to generate awareness of the forthcoming exhibition.
- Develop an object list and assess the significance of the objects. Review their condition and conservation needs. Will they need special supports to be safely displayed?
- Organise all the research material, object lists, donor information, copies of photographs and notes about the labels and layout, into plastic sleeves in a ring binder, following the numbered structure of the storyline. This keeps all the accumulated research and information in order as the storyline unfolds.
- In addition to keeping copies of all the information in the reference folder, write up the exhibition outline, developed from the concept document, into an exhibition brief. This is the blueprint for the detailed development, design and construction of the exhibition. If you're using an exhibition designer, the brief tells them exactly what you want to achieve and how you propose to do it. If it's a small display and

there is no exhibition designer, stage two and three are continuous.

- Plan the opening of the exhibition. What events and activities will you have and how will you promote it? See advice in Part 3 for planning opening events and activities.
- How will you know if the exhibition is successful? Prepare an evaluation or survey for visitors so you get some feedback. This information helps improve the next exhibition you undertake.

Stage Three – Design, production and installation

- Identify exactly which photographs and graphics you will use, order copies and obtain copyright permission.
- Write introductory text for thematic panels, photo captions and object labels. Don't write too much. You can put additional information in a folder for visitors to look at, or have it accessible on computer in the display area. Have someone else edit the text.
- Work with the designer on the layout of panels and the exhibition.
- Finalise publications or handouts
- Liaise with a conservator, or seek expert advice, about the display conditions and conservation requirements.
- Organise reproductions, props and models, as necessary.
- Develop an education kit and public programs, as well as activities for children to do in the exhibition space.
- Provide for community comment on the display, through a pinup board or comment book.
- Drawing on advice in Part 3, plan the opening of the exhibition. Design and send out invitations, prepare flyers, press releases and promotional material. The opening events are important in generating awareness of the exhibition, and your museum, and to thank sponsors and supporters.
- Watch the budget. Proof read text, labels and captions.
- Prepare and clean the exhibition space and install exhibition.
- Relax and enjoy the opening. Bask in applause!

Resources

Brian Bertram, *Display Technology for Small Museums*, Museums Association of Australia Inc (NSW), 1984

Brian Crozier, "Labels Tell the Story", *ARTeFACT*, Vol 4, No 4, December 1999

Guide to Label Writing, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (Powerhouse Museum), 1986

Museums Australia Inc (NSW), *Museum Methods – A Practical Manual for Managing Small Museums*, 1994

Richard Robins (Ed), *A Manual for Small Museums and Keeping Places*, Queensland Museum, 1995

3.2 Tips and ideas to improve displays

- Remember – less is usually best.
- A single large photograph is often better than six small images.
- Paintings can often tell us more about a subject than photographs.
- Include opportunities for play, opportunities for visitor comment and contribution, things to do and touch, changes of tone and emotion, and surprises!
- Envisage how visitors will move through the display and see it unfold. Be aware of vistas and sightlines in the display space and think about placing arresting images and objects to draw visitors into the space and highlight important themes.
- Where relevant, include more recent history and photographs so that visitors can see their own life and times in the display.
- Put the exhibition rationale or aims on the first introductory panel. People like to know what they're in for, and why the exhibition is being staged.
- Collate images showing the objects in use, and images about the subject or theme in your exhibition folders. These visual references help you and the exhibition designer contextualise the objects, and design the display with compatible materials, colours and finishes.
- Be aware of age, gender, class, culture and ethnicity – not to be politically correct, but to include different perspectives on the past. The way people experience and remember history is contoured by their age, culture, class and ethnicity. It makes the exhibition more interesting if there are different points of view about the past – that's the reality.
- Use different voices to tell the story, with quotes from people, donors, letters, diaries, housekeeping books and newspapers. Label text doesn't have to be in sentences, or all in your words.
- Structure exhibition text with headings and then primary information. Primary information should be focussed on the key point you are trying to communicate, then go on to information that is of secondary importance for those most interested in the subject. Keep a consistent structure in the layout of headings and text, type size and typography.
- Don't write too much text, an exhibition is not a book on walls. Have a table where visitors can sit and look through photographs and research material.
- People relate to people stories, and this a good way to reinterpret traditional object-based displays. For example, instead of showing rows of flat irons, refocus the display around a woman in your area who used them, laying out the ironing materials as she did. Using her memories or a photograph of her ironing, take visitors through the process. Many traditional historical displays can be reinterpreted through people's memories including farm machinery, health, housework, dentistry, schooling and blacksmithing.
- When writing captions for photographs and objects, think about what you want people to see, and draw their attention to it. Maybe there are areas of wear on the object, or a detail in the photograph you want visitors to notice. Prompting in the label helps visitors look more closely and get more out of the exhibition.
- Help visitors take stock of how the world has changed through 'then and now' panels. This works for many themes and subjects from shopping and transport, to period displays.
- Look carefully at the objects and think about what features visitors need to see to understand them, and how they can be shown to best effect. Display objects in ways that are appropriate for their purpose and function. For example, a mantle clock is designed to be seen at eye level, so it shouldn't be placed at the bottom of a showcase, historic quilts look better flat on beds than stretched on the walls.
- Edit the object list, you don't have to show every object that relates to the subject.
- Where appropriate use models and dioramas if that will help visitors understand the larger context of the theme. People of all ages love looking at models. Many communities have skilled craftsmen associated with the museum who can make props and models and things for visitors to touch. These are often the things that people remember most about a display.
- If the exhibition is in a heritage building, work with the character of the place. The exhibition should not overpower the space. The design and finishes should be sympathetic to the building's history and heritage values.
- Heritage buildings are an attraction for museum visitors, not just a venue for your displays. The museum should fit the building, not the other way around. Respect heritage buildings and sites as you would a museum object. Interpret the significance and stories of heritage buildings and places.



Significance is the starting point for all heritage interpretation.

- Think about the exhibition lighting early in the planning process, both to protect sensitive objects from damage by high light levels, and to focus on important images and objects.
- Use maps in local history displays so visitors can get their bearings. Highlight other places to see and things to do in the area, marking properties or places mentioned in the exhibition. Where relevant develop driving or walking tours related to your theme.
- Try to create a context for the objects and relate them to the landscape outside the museum. Where were they made and used?
- Make sure there are places to sit and rest. Where possible, place seats near important objects, views or activities but, at the same time, don't block circulation paths.
- Don't forget the possibilities of sound, particularly atmospheric sounds rather than oral history narratives. Most subjects and themes have a set of distinctive sounds, for example, the school playground, the blacksmith's shop, the dairy, the laundry, the kitchen. This is a good way to bring life and atmosphere to otherwise static exhibits. Subtle movement-activated sounds are more effective than sounds that play continuously.
- Consider telling the story of how the exhibition was developed in a folder with photographs and information from the beginning of the exhibition's conception. This helps visitors to understand and question the way the exhibition is structured and presented. Visitors are interested in museum processes as well as the finished product.

Case Study

3.2 Excerpt from *The Midnight Grocer exhibition brief*

Section theme: Brennan and Geraghty's as manufacturers and wholesalers

Aim

To show the range of B&G business and trademarks

Brennan and Geraghty's as a local manufacturer of wine, jam, chutney, marmalade, tomato sauce, port, sherry and vinegar.

Panel

Heading with short text and 2–3 colour or b/w photos of key trademarks. Text about the loss of local brands and manufacturers, ask visitors what lost brands and products they remember

Objects

Group of objects with B&G labels on a plinth – bottles, jars, jam, wine, etc, all with reproduction labels on open display. Possibly with folder containing information about the evolution of one of the trademarks – photo, correspondence and finished design.

Reproduce one of the B&G stamps over a lining paper for the display?



*Brennan & Geraghty's "Home Brand" display
Image courtesy Brennan & Geraghty's Store Museum,
Maryborough*

Panel title: B&G Home Brand

Text

By the mid 1880s Brennan and Geraghty owned orchards, a nursery and a factory producing jam, wine, chutney and vinegar. These goods were sold through their own store and wholesaled to other shops in Queensland.

Many towns like Maryborough once had a strong local manufacturing industry. Today most of these brands and products have disappeared, and their labels and bottles are collectors items. Do you remember local brands and products from your region?

3.2.1P

B&G wholesale and retail flyer with list of goods

and/or the quinine wine label and jam label, or the tranny with shelf of products

On plinth include the bottles with B&G labels.



4 *Public programs*

Public programs offer great opportunities for museums to engage with the community and visitors, and to create more interactive and participatory museum experiences. They help the museum connect with specific audiences, and develop conversations and activities around issues and exhibits. Public programs are an essential part of the work of a successful museum.

The term 'public program' refers to all of the activities, events, educational programs, demonstrations and performances that museums devise to engage visitors of all ages. They are an integral part of the interpretation of the collection and add value to visitors' experience and understanding of exhibitions, museums and collections. Exhibitions and temporary displays are also public programs, but the term can be used to refer to the educational programs and other activities that accompany or value-add to exhibitions.

Only the imagination and resources of the museum and its staff limit the scope and possibilities for public programs. Public programs encompass:

- All kinds of educational activities, kits and programs, designed for schools, tertiary students, special interest groups and general visitors. The purpose and content may be highly structured and closely linked to the curriculum, or be more informal, perhaps related to a collecting interest or exhibition theme.
- School holiday activities
- Performances of theatre, music, poetry, dance and book readings
- Talks, guided tours, lectures, conferences and seminars
- Demonstrations, open days, craft activities, and other interactive possibilities
- Community projects, travelling displays and 'museum in a box' outreach activities
- Festivals, tours, field trips, social activities and special events

Public programs are an increasingly prominent part of the museum's work and they serve important strategic goals – increasing visitors, attracting return visitors, providing enjoyable museum experiences, enhancing access to the collection, interpreting the collection or exhibition theme, and educating visitors. A lot of effort and time may be invested in public programs, so it's a good idea to define the purpose of the museum's public programs through a policy. This policy simply clarifies the goals and provides a framework for developing and managing public programs. It need not be very long or complicated.

Few exhibitions are launched without planning public programs of some sort, where they create more opportunities for visitors to understand the subject, further educational goals, and help make the museum experience more interactive and social. Public programs can also be used to refresh the interpretation of an old exhibition and create publicity and public awareness. They also create occasions for the local community to visit the museum.

Public programs can be built around existing displays, travelling and temporary exhibitions, local events and activities, seasonal events, and also in partnership with all kinds of community groups.

4.1 Step-by-step outline for developing education programs

Many museums structure their formal education programs with education kits on a range of themes that bridge the museum exhibition with the school curriculum. Education kits help school visitors get more out of their museum experience. They provide a guide and activities for the museum visit, sometimes with pre- and post-visit material for the classroom.

Museums often engage teachers and museum consultants to develop education kits, but you can do it yourself. Ask a local teacher to show you a kit they think is excellent to use as a guide, or look at education kits and worksheets produced by other museums. Some education kits have elaborate pictures and support material, but it doesn't have to be expensive to be effective. Do some research and find out what's already available in your area. Listen to advice from local teachers. Think about developing a kit that a group of museums in your region can share, or developing a program where schools visit several museums in the region. Above all, aim to make the museum experience fun as well as educational.

Step 1

Meet with teachers to discuss the proposed education kit, the age group and subjects in focus. Find out their needs for programs, teaching resources and excursions. Kits may be specific to an exhibition or work across the museum and across various subjects. Understand how the exhibition relates to and links with the curriculum, its scope, key concepts and skills. Define the aims of the kit and what you want students to get out of the experience. What are the main concepts and ideas to be explored through the kit and through the visit to the museum? Where possible, start this process while the exhibition is being developed so education needs can shape the

content and design. If your kit is about a theme or subject, investigate what education resources are already available.

Step 2

Work out a timeline for the research, development and implementation of the kit, from initial research, writing, testing, production, mail-out to teachers, bookings, lead time to visit, and evaluation. Make up a list of local schools and teachers for the mail-out.

Step 3

Look at your budget and resources. Is there a separate space to work with school groups; will the visit be self-guided or will the museum provide a guide? How long will they have at the museum? How many students will be coming, and will you need extra volunteers? What kind of hands-on activities can you offer to make the experience more active? What equipment will you need, from clipboards to first aid box? Have a mix of activities and games, not just a single worksheet. Will rain affect your planned activities? What things do students need to understand before their visit to the museum? If necessary, work these into a pre-visit section of the kit, such as a game, project or activity sheet, or detail this in your advice to the teacher.

Step 4

Research and prepare the kit, which may include the following:

- An introduction and briefing to the teacher
- Notes about curriculum links
- Notes about the exhibition, its content and main points or concepts
- Selections from primary sources about the theme or exhibition subject, for example, photographs, images of objects, copies of old newspaper articles and reference material. These give the flavour of the exhibition and can be used in classes.
- Other teaching material such as overheads and slides
- A sample work sheet for the museum visit and an outline of other games and activities during the visit
- Where relevant, ideas for games, activities and worksheets for pre- and post-visit classes. Students may be encouraged to make their own museum or exhibition.
- Background to the museum and what it can offer in resources and facilities, etc.
- Booking information – names, contact details, number of students, special needs, etc.
- References and sources for further information

Step 5

If possible, trial the kit with a group before putting the final version together, respond to feedback. Package all the kit materials into a folder or envelope and send to schools. Invite teachers to visit the museum, before they come with their class.

Step 6

When schools arrive think about how they will be welcomed. Is there somewhere to put their bags and have refreshments? Introduce them to the museum and establish guidelines for their visit. This doesn't have to be a lot of "do not's"; show where they can run around and what things they can touch. Have enough activity sheets and equipment for the numbers expected. If you have an activity planned, think about the photograph opportunities and invite the local media to promote the museum.

Step 7

Evaluate the effectiveness of the kit, both with teachers and students. This can take the form of a questionnaire, interviews, discussion and observation.

4.2 *Some tips for effective education programs*

- Emphasise activities, not just looking at exhibits.
- Individual activity or work sheets can ask students to look for specific things; use their powers of observation; solve puzzles by looking at the exhibition; draw things from memory or by looking at the object; work out how things are made; imagine what life was like; relate objects on display to their modern equivalents; put like objects into categories such as "this goes with that" games; put objects into chronologies; and think about change and continuity.
- Look for ways to relate the content of the exhibition to life today and kids' experience and perspective on the world.
- Encourage kids to use their imagination with craft, art and writing activities, and put the results on display.
- Have things for touch and play.
- Have a game with mystery objects where students guess the function and use of the object.
- Reproduce traditional toys, games and costumes for role play – some museums have a reserve collection of surplus or duplicate objects for school use.
- Don't lecture – education is about a lot more than learning facts and dates.
- Interact with kids through question and answer.
- Be positive and enthusiastic about their responses.

- Tell stories, encourage questions and play games.
- Encourage kids to observe and make deductions from looking at objects.
- Have something for them to take home from the museum, it can be as simple as a colouring-in picture – it's great advertising.
- Learning is a two-way-street, think about what you've learnt from the visit.
- Invest in giving children a memorable and enjoyable experience. Children are the museum visitors of the future.

Excerpt from existing Brennan & Geraghty's Education Kit

Mini Learning Theme

The Brennan & Geraghty Education Kit has been presented in the form of a mini learning theme with a visit to the Brennan & Geraghty Store Museum as an integral part of the theme. A comparison of shopping then and now, along with all the related issues, is an ideal means for our students to explore and come to appreciate the differences, changes and advantages that have come about as a result of increased technology and changes in lifestyles.

Teachers may choose to extract any number of topics and teach them independently of the theme, although it should be realised that by studying and investigating all the tangential issues, students will obtain a more global perspective of the role that the Store had within the context of the development of the Maryborough district.

Curriculum Subject Areas

Art

Advertisements; Company logos; Displays; Labels; Packaging; Posters

Information Technology

Accounts; Leaflets; Recording; Surveys

Language

Advertising slogans; Advertising jingles; Literature; Poetry; Reading; Recording; Storytelling; Surveys; Writing

Lifestyles

Clothing; Culture; Foods; Occupations; Role of women; Social changes

Maths

Bookkeeping; Calculations; Estimation; Graphs; Measurement; Money; Operations; Problem-solving; Quantities; Recording; Shapes; Volume; Weights

Physical Activity

Bicycling; Olden day games; Walking

Produced by the Cobb & Co Museum, Toowoomba

Excerpt from existing Brennan & Geraghty's Education Kit

Suggestions for classroom activities

Introductory class display

- Set up a class display of grocery items bought in today's supermarkets.
- Price the goods.
- Use play money to purchase the goods.
- Make a cash register/use a toy cash register to simulate a checkout.
- Set up another display of commonly purchased grocery items from the past. Children could bring in replica containers, packets, etc. (many companies have launched commemorative containers).
- Introduce 'old currency' by pricing the goods in pounds, shillings and pence and by having some of this currency on display.
- Have a display of the different types of packaging and label clearly. For example, a tea chest, packet, barrel, jar, tin, sugar bag.

Setting the scene

- Identify 'images' of both the modern supermarket and the olden day store. Illustrate these 'images' to make a large wall collage. Use library posters for stimulation.
- Read *Papa and the Olden Days* and use Rachel Tonkin's wonderful illustrations to allow students to gain an understanding of how a family grocery store became a focal point for a community. Compile a list of books that show similar aspects of the early days.
- Invite an older person in to the classroom to share experiences of shopping and the changes they

have witnessed. Have students prepare a list of questions to ask the guest speaker.

Comparing then and now

- Over the course of the unit visit a number of different sized grocery stores and complete the included survey sheet. (A copy of the survey questions should be given to each store prior to the class visit.) Discuss and compare differences between stores. Are there any elements common to all stores?
- Have students conduct a survey at home so that the class can determine a number of commonly purchased grocery items. For example, flour, tea, coffee, sugar, soap, washing powder, etc. Use this list as a basis for further comparisons throughout the unit.

Lifestyles

- Through literature, stimulus pictures, and film and video resources help students develop an image of the role of women in Maryborough society at approximately 40 year intervals beginning with 1875. Discuss dress, family roles, household chores, food and meat preparation requirements, what social expectations society placed on women, etc. Compare with the other images of women.

Art

- From magazines, advertising leaflets, newspapers and other print sources, focus on company and product logos. Make a display of well-known and instantly recognisable logos. Design a logo for a make-believe product.

Produced by the Cobb & Co Museum, Toowoomba

Resource

Gail Durbin, Susan Morris, Sue Wilkinson, *A Teacher's Guide to Learning from Objects*, English Heritage 1990

Museums Australia Inc (NSW), *Museum Methods – A Practical Manual for Managing Small Museums*, 1994

Roslyn Stemmler and Janelle Insley, "Planning for Education Programs/Activities", Cobb and Co Museum Toowoomba, hand out for paper delivered to the Gatton Small Museum Conference, 2001

4.3 Step-by-step outline for developing public programs

This outline for developing a public program is for running a competition with young people to imagine the museum of the future in 2101 and design, draw, paint or write about what's in the museum. However, these steps can be adapted for almost any idea, with variations depending on the nature of the program, its audience, scale, purpose and operational needs. Use the project to make new partnerships in the local community and reach out to families who may not visit the museum.

Step 1

Identify the aims of the project or activity, for example:

- To create a lasting record of the Centenary of Federation in the locality, from the perspective of young people;
- To engage young people with the idea of museums and what museums do; and
- To listen to the ideas and aspirations of youth and incorporate their ideas in the museum's collecting program and exhibitions.

Step 2

Talk the proposal over with the museum committee, teachers, community groups and others who have an interest or can contribute to the project. You may want to set up a small committee to run the project and recruit some new volunteers to help.

Step 3

Plan a timeline for the project, allowing time to advertise the project and for the works to be created. Where will the entries be collated and exhibited? If there is no room at the museum, perhaps you can do it in conjunction with the library, or show the entries in another venue such as a local hall or council space. How long will it run for? Define criteria for awarding prizes in each category. Where will the entries be stored when the project is over? For ease of display and storage, you may want to specify maximum sizes for entries.

Step 4

Plan a budget for the project. You will need funds to pay for archive boxes to store the selected work if the museum is keeping some of the entries, and an allowance for copying flyers to advertise the project. You will also need entry forms and a launch to announce the winners and open the show. Try and organise sponsorship for the prizes from local businesses and clubs.

Step 5

Develop eligibility guidelines for entries. For example, age categories, entries only from the local government area, size and scale of the works, etc. Design and produce a project information sheet and entry form. An entry or

registration form helps you to plan in advance for the number of entries. Identify a person to handle enquiries from participants.

Step 6

Work out how the competition will be promoted – through posters in schools and youth clubs, a mailbox flyer, the local newspaper or radio? Use the templates in Part 3 to help you plan the promotion and opening event. Encourage entries from the widest range of young people in the community, not just the top of the class. Get some discussion going on talkback radio.

Step 7

Who will judge the competition? Ensure “blind” judging so the authorship of the entries is unknown to the judges. Allow for an additional “people’s choice” prize, and some works chosen for archiving by young visitors. Work out categories for prizes to recognise ideas, not just beautiful drawings or writing. Try to organise a small fee for all works chosen for archiving.

Step 8

Who will open the show? Try to find a prominent person who is interesting to young people to launch the project. Where and when will it be launched?

Also ...

During the exhibition provide a comments book or pin board for people to comment on the entries and ideas, and keep this with the selected works as a record of the event.

If you are archiving some of the entries for the museum collection, include some of the project planning material, photographs, advertising, and newspaper coverage about the event, so the records are complete and self-explanatory.

Remember to ask participants to write a short description about themselves to include with their entry. Photograph the authors of the works selected for archiving. Exhibition organisers in 2101 will want to know the provenance and context of the works and a bit about their makers.

Consider how the museum will respond to the ideas young people have expressed about museums and collections. Develop further projects to take account of what they think should be collected or exhibited in the museum.

Resources

Inheritance is a useful resource kit for high school students, designed to help them develop an appreciation of Australia's heritage through the exploration of family artefacts. Developed by Artlab in South Australia, for the Education Department, the kit can be downloaded from Australian Museums On Line (AMOL):

<http://amol.org.au/craftpublications/education/inheritance.pdf>

5 Water

Water is the binding agent for our natural and cultural history. It is a basic human need, common to all people, transcending culture and nationality. Almost everything to do with human life is closely associated with water, from the composition of the body, to our food, good health and living places being close by water. Then and now, water is at the centre of the economy and our domestic rituals – such as the shared cup of tea. And it has important spiritual connotations for most people and faiths, signifying rebirth and renewal.

Australian history is written in water. The first sites of European settlement were based on water – harbours, rivers and fresh water supplies. Early European explorers followed rivers to penetrate the inland and were obsessed by the idea of a great inland sea. They failed at times for want of water, and they survived elsewhere through Aboriginal skills in finding and conserving water, and their generosity in sharing vulnerable water supplies. The availability of water governed the early settlement patterns in Australia, and its mining and agricultural history. We celebrate Australian achievement in managing and exploiting water, in projects such as the Snowy River Scheme. And today water lies at the heart of some of our biggest environmental dilemmas, and our still-growing understanding of the land. Salinity and land clearing are just two environmental issues that can be canvassed through museum collections and archives.

Just as the national history can be described through water, so too can local histories. The establishment of most towns was governed by the availability of water. Pastoral runs were set up near good water supplies. However, places with good water were generally already occupied by Aboriginal people, who had their own ways of managing and conserving water and a complex system of beliefs and affinities surrounding water systems. Early conflicts and misunderstandings often centred around water. Mining and industries were located near water, or often struggled to secure and improve water resources. The progress and growth of many towns is marked through improvements in the water supply. Water affected not just the economy and the home, but every facet of life, including health and recreation. Water places are still important. In the last 50 years, the opening of public swimming pools was an important new civic amenity, usually built through combined community effort.

In coastal areas, as in the inland, water shapes our relationship with the environment. It anchors our recreation: fishing, boating, surfing and swimming, and it is the basis for some of our happiest memories: camping and summer holidays.

Although water is a common human need, the way we use it is culturally determined. Aboriginal, Chinese and European settlers had different ways of using and carrying water and this is reflected in their material culture, practices and beliefs. Water is a theme that refracts these cultural differences, while underlining a shared history. It is a rich subject for museums that is strongly reflected in the collections. But how well do the objects in your museum connect with the substance of regional and local water histories? Below are some ideas to help you investigate and interpret the water history of your area.

5.1 Looking for water in the collection

Look around the museum and identify all the objects that are related to water. The range and variety of objects underlines the importance of water in our culture and history. You may be surprised at the number of:

- steam engines
- furphy water carts
- pumps and irrigation machinery
- canvas water bags, bush showers and billy cans
- washing tubs, mangle and wringers
- buckets and dippers and improvised kerosene tin wash trough and buckets
- iceboxes, coolgardie safes, butter coolers and other evaporative coolers, including air conditioners
- water filters and drip stones
- cast iron water fountains and boilers
- kettles and teapots, tea and coffee sets
- galvanised tubs and baths for bathing
- ceramic toilet sets and washstands
- bottles – for cordials and alcohol
- chamber pots, bedpans, pipes and sanitary equipment
- swimsuits, beach and pool toys
- surfboards and equipment for water recreation
- boats and ship models

Humble and common objects in museum collections can communicate new meanings when they're contextualised in thematic displays. In this case, the water related objects are interpreted with local research on the water histories of the district. For example, the museum or council archives, or local property owners may have local rainfall records, and the collection is sure to have photographs showing floods, drought (absence of water), dams, new

bridges, and water spouting from artesian bores. Waterways are a favourite subject for local artists, then and now, and family photographs often show picnics by water on summer holidays. Canvassing community memories about water will also yield important information, objects, photographs and stories.

The range of themes connected with water touch on pivotal issues for the history and development of towns and regions, and the subject can be used as the focus for exploring local history and more contemporary water issues. For example:

- migration and journeys
- weather, climate, floods and topography
- environmental change and sustainability
- science and innovation
- water supply and conservation
- agriculture and industry
- domestic life, and food and health
- recreation and holidays



Water Display – The Great Cobar Heritage Centre
Image courtesy The Great Cobar Heritage Centre

5.2 Case Study – Cobar Regional Museum

Water display – The Great Cobar Heritage Centre

The Cobar Regional Museum shaped its local history exhibition around the theme of water, contrasting Aboriginal and European uses of water. Improvements in the standard of living and the town's prosperity were tied to improvements in the water supply. After decades of agitation, reliable water finally arrived by pipeline in 1965. Green lawns and trees changed the look of the town and kept the dust down. From the air, aqua swimming pools now dot the townscape.

Sample introductory text

Water was crucial to the settlement and prosperity of Cobar. In drought years lack of water closed the mines and on three occasions caused the evacuation of women and children. Cobar's water problems weren't solved until the Nyngan pipeline opened in 1965. The pipeline brings fresh water from the Bogan River and connects Cobar, via the Macquarie River at Warren, to reliable water supplies hundreds of kilometres away in Burrendong Dam at Wellington.

Other labels quoted from advice books and a local poem about water, bringing different voices into the exhibition. In places with insecure water supplies you will find a lot of folklore and local recipes for conserving and treating water. One of the local hotels in Cobar advertised that they washed their sheets every six weeks!

Water Recipes – sample quote

Pure Water ... After long dry weather it is never quite safe to drink water unless it has been first boiled, or run through a good filter. The worst of boiled water is it is not pleasant to drink, having a flat, half stale taste, owing to the loss of carbonate acid in it. But this can be restored and the water made as palatable as before with a little trouble ... A good plan is to stand on a table or high stool and having one bucket on the floor, pour from the full one, holding it as high as you can, do this ten or a dozen times, and you will find the water the same as ever to drink.

Mrs Lance Rawson: *Refer to me for Everything: Australian Enquiry Book of Household and General Information, 1894.*

Sample photograph caption

The standpipe at the corner of Becker and Lewis Street pumped water from 'the old Res', supplying water carts and household buckets. The man is Joseph Henry Jeffery, newsagent, baker and auctioneer, reported in 1882 to be guarding the only water in Cobar with a revolver and selling it for 6d a bucket.

Project ideas – mapping your water history

Set up a project to document and interpret the water history of your area. You may want to advertise for new volunteers to help with the work. Volunteers like to have tasks that have definite goals and outcomes, and this project could be shaped to be self directed by the volunteer. Use the templates (in Part A) to help you plan your water project, which could include one or all of these elements:

5.3 Assess the significance of your water collections

Do more research on the most significant water related items and document their history and context, particularly focussing on the objects with stories linked to your area. Consider doing this project with other museums in your region. Review the collection to see how well it reflects the district's water history. Identify areas that should be better represented in the collection and ask the community to help find objects. For example, does the collection include anything about the opening and activities at the local swimming pool? Where was the cordial factory in your area and is there a photograph of it to display with the collection of cordial bottles and crates?

Case Study

Yandilla Station steam launch – Millmerran and District Historical Society

Single objects can tell distinctive water histories, showing the connections between people, places and objects. The hull of the Yandilla Station steam launch has been rescued and restored by the Millmerran and District Historical Society. The story of this unique vessel, built by Francis Gore and John Patrick Purcell, the Yandilla Station blacksmith in 1878, is published in *Water Baby: The Yandilla Station Steam Launch* by Grant Uebergang. The book recounts the history of the vessel's manufacture and use, rescuing sheep, property and people during floods of the Condamine River. This fascinating story focussed on a single significant object, and explores the interaction between people and the environment. It highlights the ingenuity of Gore in dealing with the risks of running a large sheep operation on the Condamine, and the outstanding skills of his blacksmith John Purcell.

5.4 Research your local water history and identify important water sites

Water sites include: tanks, troughs and reservoirs, pipelines, standpipes, storm water and sewage installations, bores, dams and bridges, water for the railways and industry, fire hydrants and engines, fountains, bubblers and even baptismal fonts. Don't

forget water places in the natural environment: creeks, crossings, rivers, streams, lagoons, and of course the sea. And remember to map the recreation and beauty spots. Old parish maps show stock routes and water reserves for travellers, but sometimes these sites are receding in local memories and need to be rediscovered. Cordial factories were located near good water. Water histories unveil a web of relationships between human activities and water. Housekeeping books and old rural newspapers are full of advice and information about water.

Resource

The Department of Natural Resources web site has extensive information on contemporary water issues, including the Great Artesian Basin: www.dnr.qld.gov.au/

5.5 Map water places and objects as a community event

Hold a briefing about the project and give teams of people disposable cameras or film to go out and photograph water places, objects and activities. Parks and gardens, remnant water troughs for horses, and flood heights on buildings are all artefacts of water history. The laundry and kitchen sink are also part of water history. Develop the films and have the teams select the best photographs, mount them on card and write captions describing why they think the place, activity or person is significant for the town's water history. These panels can then go on exhibition in the library or local hall.

Plot all the water places and significant objects on a large map. You could enlarge this for exhibition and annotate the map with photographs and captions about each site. See if your local Council can help with the base map. They may already have done a heritage study that documents many of the sites.

Indigenous people have important relationships with water and will have different perspectives on the sites and history. Take time to investigate and record their stories and comments as the water sites are documented and encourage them to participate in the activities.

Resource

For more information about using this community mapping technique see Meredith Walker, *What's Important About Our Town? A workshop model for identifying local heritage and character*, National Trust of Queensland, June 1993.

5.6 Develop a walking or driving tour of water places

Water places include both natural and cultural sites, although the two are usually interwoven. Start at the museum with an introductory display about your water history. If the museum doesn't have the space perhaps

the Visitor Information Centre could be the starting point with a map and orientation display. Develop a brochure and annotate the town or district map with descriptions of the water places and their significance. If the brochure is successful you could further develop the tour with interpretive signs, using quotes from primary sources and reproductions of historic photographs. Another way to interpret your water history is in an outdoor shelter, with a series of photographs and maps behind glass, perhaps at the lay-by off the highway.

5.7 Hold a public event to collect people's water stories

Use a local hall if the museum doesn't have the space. Take some of the museum's objects and water photographs for everyone to look at. Make an effort to invite people who've worked in water jobs, and who may not normally come to a museum event. Older people vividly remember the trials and tribulations of drought, flood and water shortages at home. Ask people to bring a water story, object or photograph. Have sheets of paper for people to write down their water stories. Arrange to copy photographs and photograph objects, and obtain permission to quote from them in forthcoming displays and publications. Encourage those who've brought objects to show, to write down the history of their object, so the story can be passed on in their family with the object. The event should be fun and light-hearted, as well as productive. You can turn the results into an impromptu exhibition over a weekend, or plan a later exhibition when you've finished the research. Invite your local paper or radio station to report on the occasion. This event will help you gauge community interest in further water activities and exhibitions. Ask for suggestions and seek new volunteers for more water work.

See if a local business or water authority will sponsor the event so you can offer small prizes for the most interesting, humorous, unusual or hidden water story. Build a relationship with them to support future water projects or an exhibition.

Write a story for the local paper to advertise the event and outline the kind of information you are seeking: water in family life, droughts and flood, and information from people who've worked in water supply, bore drilling, tank and dam building. Many rural businesses have a water dimension. Sometimes there are poems and local folklore about water. See if you can use the local library as a base to continue collecting information. Copy some of the museum's photographs and have them in a folder or hung on the wall to stimulate recollections. You could have a book for people to write down their water memories.

5.8 Celebrate your water history with a special water festival

Hold a water festival at the museum or at a local water spot. It could be a dramatisation of your town's water history, with people or children dressed as different characters in the story. Plan some water games for children and family events, perhaps a water version of the egg and spoon race, (running with water in a spoon), and dunking for apples (NB have the event in summer). Have a fancy hat parade with children making hats based on water vessels or themes. Organise some museum demonstrations around water, such as showing how well the canvas water bag and Coolgardie safe work, or doing laundry the old-fashioned way. In arid areas, Aboriginal people developed clever ways of conserving water such as enhancing water runoff into waterholes, and making water vessels from tree burls. Find a local science teacher to help organise some experiments with water. Ask a water diviner to come and demonstrate. Particularly invite everyone in town who works with water. Consider including a ceremonial element. Perhaps an Indigenous representative could open the event with some words about the spiritual importance of water, and your local minister may also give thanks for water blessings. If you're doing an exhibition you may want to have the festival at the time you open the exhibition.

Engage an artist to help children make water vessels with cast off and recycled materials and float them together at the end of the day.

5.9 Develop an exhibition about your water history

Develop an exhibition about your water history drawing together different perspectives on water and using the research assembled during earlier phases of the project. Make it an indoor/outdoor exhibition so you can have the real thing splashing around. A lot of the basic water vessels such as buckets and tubs are not fragile, and if you have duplicates you could fill some with water. Remember to include local stories and folklore. Water is about people, not just objects and places. Perhaps a local plumbing firm will help build an outdoor water interactive, or hook up a pump. Integrate natural and cultural histories and show how local landforms and ecosystems are shaped by water. Flora and fauna are particularly adapted to local water conditions. Include contemporary debates about water rights and water conservation, presenting both sides of the debate. Showcase new water conservation devices, and emphasise that water must not be taken for granted.

Find out what water and environmental research is being done locally and feature this in the museum. Talk to local science teachers about students' water-based research

and environmental projects and see if you can show these in the museum.

Document and record the water recreation of children in your area, how they play and interact with water, and their favourite water spots. Develop an exhibition about summer holidays based on water and involve children during the year in planning and documenting water related objects that are important to them: fishing rods, boogie boards, swimming costumes, life saving medals, etc.

5.10 Commission a local artist to interpret the town's water history

Objects and historical sources don't always tell the whole story. Artists can help to interpret and commemorate aspects of water history that may not be represented through collections, images or historical records. In conjunction with your local council, commission an art work based on the water map, such as a mural, a water sculpture, a quilt or a photographic essay, or consider a public fountain to commemorate the importance of water to the environment, Indigenous people and European settlers. Perhaps a local water supply business will help sponsor the commission. The artists could draw on material assembled through your water research and mapping, or hold a painting competition with local schools, again based around the town's water history, or perhaps to promote water conservation.

Talk over your ideas with your local council planner or engineer, and government departments such as the Department of Natural Resources, and seek other partners in your water project. Aim to have fun! Build new partnerships and develop a lasting archive about your water history.

Resource

For advice on working with artists and commissioning public art see: Elizabeth Beal, "Public art guidelines for artists and commissioners" in *Art + Law*, vol 6, no 2, 2001.

6 Land and Environment

Land and environment are themes that encompass nearly every aspect of Australian life and history, touching on some of the most contentious issues in contemporary politics at both a national and local level. Big subjects like land, water and the environment can be used to measure change and explore different perspectives on these important issues. They can also provide a framework for a fresh look at regional and local history, with opportunities to present a more holistic view of the complex inter-relationships between people and the natural and cultural environment.

In addition, focussing on themes such as land and environment is an opportunity for museums to rethink the meaning of the collection and the way it is interpreted. Many objects in museum collections are associated with enormous changes in the environment, and in the way Australians interact with the land, although these changes are not always evident in the interpretation of the object in the museum. For example, most historical collections contain axes and land clearing equipment, although we rarely interpret their impact and the way they've changed the landscape and environment. Yet these were the primary tools of colonisation and settlement. Indeed, the first act of European settlement, in Sydney Cove and elsewhere, was to cut down trees. This was also the source of the first conflict with Aboriginal people, who had profoundly different beliefs and living patterns dependent on trees.

The natives were well pleased with our people until they began clearing the ground, at which they were displeased and wanted them to be gone. Lieutenant William Bradley, 21.1.1788

The concepts of land and environment have different meanings and connotations for people, depending on their cultural background, age, gender, class and occupation. A museum is a safe place to bring people together to explore diverse points of view about land and environment in a way that is respectful and tolerant. Exhibitions and events based around these themes can inform contemporary debates in your community and stimulate discussion. They also help the museum forge new partnerships with organisations, industry and groups active in the community.

6.1 Land and Environment Themes

The range of subjects and sub-themes covered by land and environment are vast, and include:

- land use by Indigenous people and the cultural and spiritual associations of land; first impressions of the land by explorers, settlers and pastoralists, and by

later migrants;

- understanding the land through collectors, naturalists, scientists and innovation; mapping the land and land clearing;
- all kinds of industry, mining, agriculture and pastoral activities;
- flora and fauna;
- water;
- past and present environmental issues – including feral pests and land clearing; sporting, recreation and cultural uses of land - for example, burying the dead; transport, urbanisation and tourism;
- climate, drought, fire and flood;
- land management and environmental groups; and
- the environment as a legacy to our children.

All of these themes offer rich possibilities for museums to reinterpret their existing collections, and to undertake projects in partnership with other groups to record, collect and exhibit the inter-relationships between people and the environment. Below are just three projects about the land and environment, but the collections and a little research and consultation will suggest many others.

Project ideas – land and the environment

From time to time, it is important to take stock of the museum's collection and consider how effectively it represents and interprets the land and environmental history of the region. Museums have many collections associated with land use, such as agricultural machinery, but their impact on the land and environment is rarely interpreted. In the 21st century, environmental issues will be increasingly important in all kinds of decisions facing governments and communities. The turn of a new century and significant commemorations like the Centenary of Federation provide a strong focus for reassessing the collections. By collecting more recent material and refocussing the exhibitions and interpretation through these themes, the museum can be an important place to educate and inform community debate, forging new partnerships as it does this.

You can do these projects within the museum, but consider joining with other museums in your area to collectively identify significant objects relating to the land and environmental history of the region, as well as to collect new material about the last 50 years. You can also document objects in family collections, helping them to look after the collection and keep it in its original context of use.

6.2 Landcare

Landcare is one of the most important environmental movements of the last decade. In 2101 when your town is celebrating the Bicentenary of Federation, they may be looking to include Landcare in their exhibition about the community's life and concerns a hundred years ago in 2001. But how well will our museum collections represent their work for future generations? Consider documenting and/or collecting material about the work and activities of your local Landcare group, (or other environmental and community organisations). This might include interviews with people about their involvement in the group, covering issues such as what motivates Landcare volunteers? Possible acquisitions for the collection include tree planting tools, scientific reports and publicity, photographs of the landscape and people at work (great for a before and after photograph in 100 years time), and a set of clothing worn by a Landcare volunteer – with photographs of the person wearing them at work. You could advertise for a new volunteer to help the museum document and collect items about Landcare at work in your area, or invite a local school to help.

6.3 Survey collections related to land and environment themes

Use the template for thematic studies to assess the significance of objects related to land and environmental themes.

Step 1

- Research the land and environmental history of your locality. Look at the accounts of the first explorers and settlers in the region. How did they see the land and interact with the environment?
- Talk to local Indigenous people about how they use the land, past and present, and the meanings the land has for them.
- Talk to government agencies, farmers and your local council about the key issues for the environment in your area.
- Look for photographs showing how the land has changed over time and with various land uses.

Step 2

Identify the main themes and sub themes touching on the environment and land use. The list above is a starting point.

Step 3

Survey the collections, including pictures and photographs, and identify particular objects that interpret the themes you've listed. Try and find at least one object for each theme or activity. Look at where the gaps and omissions are. For example, you may find lots of objects

under the agriculture theme but few about drought or environmental groups. This review is the starting point for planning more strategic collecting to create balanced and more representative records for the future.

Step 4

Improve the documentation of the objects listed under each theme and assess their significance, using the template in 1.7. What story do they tell and why are they important? The meaning of objects can change over time and this process helps to investigate their meaning and plan new interpretations. Follow the significance assessment template to help you research and explore the significance of objects associated with land and environmental themes.

Step 5

Use the results of your thematic survey to underpin a range of projects and activities. Revise your collection policy to better represent local land and environmental themes and identify priority areas for strategic collecting. Reinterpret the significant objects you've identified in the survey to make their meaning more accessible. Link with other museums to develop a joint interpretation or linked exhibitions on land and environmental themes, with a shared brochure to direct visitors around the district. For example, one museum in the area might focus on timber-getting and land clearing, while another highlights agricultural activities, someone else does feral weeds and pests, and the art gallery or art society explores the theme in paintings and photographs.

Resource

For more information about this process see Kylie Winkworth, *Connecting Collections: Thematic Studies of Museum and Heritage Collections, a guide for museums, heritage networks and communities*, Queensland Heritage Trails Network, 2001.

6.4 Case Study

The Linn Tractor – Laidley Pioneer Village

Tractors and farm machinery have had a huge impact on the land. Museums often collect and interpret these items in terms of their technology, but they may also have social value to the people who used them, and help us understand and mark changing attitudes to the environment. Significance assessment helps to clarify these changing meanings and collate memories and information about the object.

From 1939 to 1949 the Linn tractor was used to open logging roads and haul hoop pine and other timber from the rugged slopes of Mt Mistake near Laidley. With its patented caterpillar track, the 1928 American-built tractor was a predecessor of modern earthmovers and bulldozers. The historical significance of the Linn tractor involves its well-recognised design, its associations with the timber industry and its contribution to the economic development of the Lockyer Valley.

In the Laidley Pioneer Village, the Linn is a focus for recalling memories of the timber industry and the centrepiece of their timber-getting collection. The museum has the operating manual for the tractor and many photographs and recollections of it in use. The tractor was restored with help from volunteers, some of whom worked as timber-getters with the machine. It is used on open days and in the parade for Laidley's Spring Festival, underlining its social significance for the museum's volunteers and people in the community.

Mt Mistake is now a national park and the tractor is acquiring new meanings as an artefact of environmental change and land use practices in the past. Photographs of it in use, weighed down with enormous logs, prompt questions and reflections that point to changing attitudes to the environment, while still respecting the hard work and skills of the men who used the Linn on Mt Mistake.



*The Linn Tractor at Laidley Pioneer Village.
Image courtesy Laidley Pioneer Village.*

6.5 Mapping the land exhibition

Develop an exhibition or community project exploring the varied ways that land is described, delineated and understood. Alternatively, combine an exhibition or the relabelling of certain objects in the museum, with a community event or activity based on a land or environmental theme.

The idea of mapping the land crosses boundaries between places and objects, images and recollections, the past and the present. It's a concept that measures change and recognises there are various ways of conceiving the land. Remember to include different cultural perspectives and the views of people of different ages. In particular, meet with local Indigenous people to seek their participation, and record what meanings the land has for them. Speak to recent migrants about their first impressions of the land. Reinterpret the significance of land related collections by developing new labels and photographs showing how the object has shaped the land and environment. Ploughing and planting crops, for example, creates a kind of land map. Mapping the land includes a wide variety of collections. For example surveyors' maps, tools and chains were used to carve up the land according to particular policies and economies. They embody a way of conceiving land in terms of uses and property, which contrasts with the meaning of land for Indigenous people. District maps are expressions of this way of thinking. They were the essential tools for development and occupation of the land. Fence posts and barbed wire are also ways of delineating the land, as are street grids, bridges and railway lines.

The way a locality is painted by successive generations also points to particular ways of seeing and understanding the land. Include a display of landscape paintings and sculptures by local artists. Also the land and environment is reflected in a wide range of improvised objects and locally made crafts, both contemporary and historical. Engage a local photographer to document land and environmental markers. Talk to local art and technical teachers about a school project or competition based around different kinds of maps or objects representing the land. Consult science and history teachers about the curricula relating to heritage and the environment and see how your programs can intersect with their teaching. Your local council produces all kinds of maps, as do government departments, farmers, businesses and national parks.

Refer to the exhibition template in Part A for step-by-step guidance on exhibition development.

6.6 *Celebrating the land and environment*

Create an event, exhibition or activity to celebrate an aspect of the land or environment in your area. This might be focussed around a particular feature in your area such as forests or a national park, or you could create an event around a local product, crop or harvest. Many places already have seasonal festivals to celebrate important crops or produce and these help underpin tourism promotion of the area. Talk to your Council and tourism operators about their plans and promotional strategies and see how you can piggyback on their work.

The environment is not just found in national parks and the countryside. Explore urban environments such as backyards, mapping their changing uses, design and material culture. Hold an event to exhibit contemporary or historical objects made from the land, such as pots, timber crafts and furniture improvised from found timbers.

Explore the idea of land and environment through a particular element characteristic of your area. It might be climate, soil, rain, beaches, reefs, geography or forests. These are all subjects that highlight specific ecosystems, and refract particular histories and relationships with the land. They can be strongly based on your locality but also touch on wider symbolic and cultural meanings, and contemporary environmental debates. It doesn't have to be an exhibition, simply pick out some of the ideas for a community event or project.

Taking the themes of soil for example, as a characteristic of your area, you could touch on the geology, look at how it's shaped agriculture, parks and gardens, road making and getting bogged, bricks and building materials, dams and mining. You may find a surprising array of objects that touch on soil, either in the collection or to be borrowed from the community, and uncover different cultural relationships including Indigenous uses and the ways that later migrants have worked with the soil.

Below is an outline of an exhibition on the theme of trees and forests. You could work this up as a specific exhibition, but you could also add some of these components to your existing timber display. Add photographs of timber workers to your display of axes and saws. Interview people who have used cross-cut saws and axes, or cut shingles, highlighting the risks and skills in traditional timber-getting. Add quotes from your interviews to the display of timber tools. Remember to photograph your interviewees, perhaps in the area where they worked, or examining the tools. Look for before and after photographs of areas that have been cleared. Look for objects made from local timbers. Find out what

happened to the timber that was logged and include this in your display. Don't forget to include women in your tree project. Most women on the land were competent with an axe and often took the other end of a cross-cut saw.

6.7 *Root and Branch – an exhibition about forests, trees and timber*

Possible themes:

- 1 Religious and spiritual connotations of trees for various faiths, for example, the cross, tree of life imagery on prayer rugs and textiles, etc.
- 2 Trees as symbols of authority and power: flagpoles, staff, shepherd's crook and judge's gavel
- 3 Indigenous relationships with trees and forests, spiritual meanings, food and objects made from timber and forest products
- 4 Trees as markers of exploration, such as the Dig Tree at Cooper Creek, memorial avenues, etc.
- 5 Clearing the land and domesticating the wilderness, carving out a patch of bush for the first house – a common image in early photographs and paintings of the district; pulling out stumps; the first things made with local timber: huts, shingles, improvised furniture, etc.
- 6 Timber tools such as axes and cross-cut saws and local timber skills, carpentry tools, the popularity of wood chopping at agricultural shows
- 7 Objects made from local timbers, both old and new, and the material culture of trees from cradle to coffin
- 8 Marking the territory with timber fences, bridges and railway sleepers
- 9 Timber-getting and logging industries, powering industry and mines with local timber; the life and experience of timber-getters, dangers and difficulties in the forests, working bullocks and tractors; memories of the first chain-saws
- 10 Significant timber buildings and structures in your area
- 11 The forest ecosystem, flora and fauna dependent on forests and trees; threats from fire, weeds and pests
- 12 Recent conservation and environmental debates, including commercial plantations, pests and white ants, new science and products found in trees

6.8 *Public programs and activities*

You can run tree-related activities in various locations around town, including schools, national parks, outdoor locations and even the hardware shop. Consider holding your tree project at the same time as the local agricultural

show or field day. The more people involved, the better the result. Include some community activities and public programs to extend participation in the exhibition.

- 1 Ask people to nominate their favourite tree in your area, including parks, street trees, avenues and trees in the bush, and write a paragraph to explain why. Perhaps the local paper would run it as a regular feature leading up to your event.
- 2 Ask school children to paint or write about their favourite tree and put the results in the exhibition.
- 3 Ask people to photograph or draw their favourite tree, (or, for that matter, say why they hate trees) and put the results on display.
- 4 Your council may already have a list of significant trees in the locality. Link up with your local council, especially the parks and gardens staff, and celebrate local parks and street plantings.
- 5 Combine with the local art society or art gallery and mount an exhibition of images of trees and forests.
- 6 Call for new volunteers to help lead tours around the locality to look at trees and their natural and cultural history.
- 7 Identify buildings made from local timbers, and the sites of saw mills.
- 8 Talk to the library about holding story-telling sessions focussed around trees and forests.
- 9 Locate timber workers to help interpret timber-getting collections.
- 10 Find timber craftsmen, cabinet makers and woodworkers in your district and exhibit their work, or maybe you know someone who makes sculptures with chain-saws.
- 11 Invite people to make objects or animals from recycled and found timbers and have a temporary outdoor exhibition.

Resources

Look at books about trees and forests to get more ideas. There may be a specific forest history of your area prepared as part of the work on Regional Forest Agreements.

See also:

Rod Ritchie, *Seeing the Rainforests in 19th century Australia*, Rainforest Publishing, Sydney, 1989.

Peter Solness, *Tree Stories*, Chapter and Verse, 1999.

John Vader, *Red Cedar, the Tree of Australia's History*, Reed Books, 1987.

For information about land and environmental issues see the Queensland Department of Natural Resources website at: <http://www.dnr.qld.gov.au>

Your local librarian can help you access the site if you are not on the web.

See also Environment Australia at <http://www.environment.gov.au/> this site has a comprehensive range of sources and links to other natural and cultural heritage sites.

Youth

It is easy to lose sight of young people as important contributors to museums. We welcome schools to museums with special programs and activities, but we rarely create occasions to give young people a direct voice in the museum and a chance to shape the content of displays and collections.

Young people will inherit the museum collections assembled over the last century and we cannot take their interest for granted. Museums and galleries need to be active in engaging youth today, both as an audience and as content providers. If we want young people to be the future custodians of the collections, it is appropriate that they have opportunities to build those collections in ways that reflect their interests and concerns.

One area where young people are content providers is in the exhibition of school art works and occasional showings of science and environmental projects. The annual exhibition of Year 12 major art works is an increasingly popular event in many museums and galleries, bringing new audiences of parents and relatives who may not be regular museum visitors. These are very important events to the young people involved. Museums and galleries are prestigious places and inclusion in an exhibition brings status and public recognition. Museums can use their spaces in a positive way to give young people respect and a forum to speak about their experience and aspirations, and older people have a chance to listen and learn from them.

Below are some ideas for activities and programs involving youth. They are projects that will draw parents and friends and generate community comment. Importantly too, they are framed to create archives for the future that will tell future generations about the life and experience of children in 2001. In addition to the ideas below, many of the concepts described under other themes are adaptable as specific youth projects. Land, water and environmental issues are important themes for youth, as they are very aware they will have to deal with the legacy of contemporary environmental management.

7.1 Case study

Children of the Federation – Museum of Tropical Queensland

Museums around Australia have found many creative ways to engage children with the people, history and legacy of Federation, and to have them create the content, not just consume someone else's exhibition. The Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville has three projects about Federation drawing on student responses to the period, with the museum exhibiting the results or holding performances. These are effective ways of building new audiences and listening to young people.

My Favourite Australian is a project where students draw their favourite Australian past or present.

Time Pieces invites students to develop a performance piece by imagining thoughts, reactions and conversations related to an event associated with Federation. It may be a play, poetry, dance, debate, music or any combination, with sets, props and costumes.

With *Encapsulating Time* the class builds a three-dimensional frame furnished with props, objects and support material to expand the Federation theme on anything from costume to litter of the future. Three questions are given as the starting point: What was life like at the time of Federation? What does Federation mean to you? What do you think life will be like in 2101?

7.2 Youth envoys

One element in the national Centenary of Federation celebrations is the appointment of 100 youth envoys aged 15-16. Chosen from all over Australia, and from a wide variety of backgrounds and circumstances, these 100 young people will attend official events and keep a record of their experiences in the year, in whatever form they choose. The diary of their year's activities will then be archived as a lasting document of the Centenary of Federation.

The concept behind this program – of recording the Centenary of Federation through the eyes of young people – can be adapted to your area. A regional or local adaptation of this concept might place less emphasis on the youth envoys attending special events and celebrations, instead refocussing the concept on youth reporting the year's activities in their community. Using a variety of media, youth reporters could be selected to record their responses to the Centenary of Federation, daily life in the community in 2001, and their aspirations for the future. Like the national model, the results could be placed in the museum's archives, or in the local

studies library. The aim would be to create a picture of the experience, concerns and ideas of young people about the Centenary of Federation, the life and times of their locality and their hopes for the future. It's just possible that some young people may still be alive to celebrate the bicentenary of Federation and see their youthful work re-exhibited.

If you pursue this project make sure to have a wide cross-section of youth reporters. You may want to seek your local council's support or do the project in conjunction with local schools. A small fee should be paid for the 2001 youth reports and copyright clearance negotiated at the start.

Resource

See www.centenary.gov.au for more information about youth envoys.

7.3 *The museum of the future*

We build collections as a legacy for future generations but rarely ask the next generation what they think should be in the collection, what kind of issues the museum should explore or what the museum of the future might look like. It would be interesting in a hundred years' time to look at the ideas and visions of young people in 2001 and check them against the museum reality in 2101.

Organise a project or competition with young people in your district. Ask them to imagine the museum of the future in 2101, and design, paint, draw, model or write about what's in the museum. What will the museum in your town look like in a hundred years (and by extension what will the town look like), what objects from today should be in the museum of the future and what exhibitions or issues will the museum explore about our time and place?

The entries might describe an exhibition or the museum building. They could be in the form of a poster for an exhibition, a design for a flyer for the museum, or be a review of an exhibition, or a letter about visiting the museum of the future. A selection of the most interesting responses can be archived for the future, as a document about our time, and the ideas and aspirations of young people today for the museum of the future. The exhibition might be a competition, or you could pay a small fee or offer a modest gift or voucher for all entries selected for exhibition.

During the exhibition provide a comments book or pin board for people to comment on the entries and ideas, and keep this with the selected works as a record of the event.

Also include with the archived entries the project planning material, photographs, advertising, and newspaper coverage about the event, so the records are

complete and self-explanatory.

Remember to ask each participant to write a short description about themselves to include with their entry. Photograph the authors of the works selected for archiving. Exhibition organisers in 2101 will want to know the provenance and context of the works and a bit about their makers.

Consider how the museum will respond to the ideas young people have expressed about museums and collections. Develop further projects to take account of what they think should be collected or exhibited in the museum.

7.4 *Museum objects for the future from 2001*

An alternative to the "Museum of the future" is a project for young people to list or photograph perhaps 3 objects from today that are significant to them, or to the way of life of the community, and that they want to see preserved in museums in 100 years time.

On a simple level this could take the form of nominations put on a community notice board – a sort of exhibition in progress, or it could be a regular spot in your local paper. Alternatively young people could be asked to draw or photograph an object from contemporary life that should be in the museum in 2101, and write a label about why it is important enough to be in the museum. The resulting panels or paintings could be put on exhibition. In addition, the museum could use these comments to plan some contemporary collecting, responding to what young people value from today and recording their point of view as part of the collection documentation.

7.5 *Collectors of the future*

Children are natural collectors. They collate and organise objects, specimens and found items as a focus for curiosity and to help make sense of the world. Almost every child at some stage assembles a small collection of things that catch their attention, be it rocks, marbles, shells, stamps, toys or Pokemon cards. Using the principles for the projects outlined above, create an event whereby children exhibit their favourite objects; ask them to write labels about why they are important.

Alternatively, ask children to make a museum exhibit about a topical subject, an aspect of the local environment or a favourite place, object or collection. Take a standard cardboard box as the base or "showcase", sectioned in whatever way they want, and create a setting or diorama to interpret the theme, selecting objects, drawing or pasting things into it, and writing a label. You could ask children to interpret an

environmental theme, such as litter, storm water pollution, or coastal ecology. For example, if the theme was sand dune conservation, the box or diorama might contain sand, samples of grasses or fencing, miniature keep off signs, pictures of four wheel drive vehicles, and some words about following the marked paths. Other possible themes include exploring backyards, holidays, school and families.

The aims of this project may vary depending on the theme in focus and the age of the children, but all variations would build skills in design and thinking through objects and three-dimensional settings. Document the entries and keep the results in the museum's archives.

Any of these variations would be a good way to celebrate International Museums Day, held annually on May 18th.

Case Study

Warning Small Parts – Queensland Performing Arts Trust, in partnership with the Queensland Museum

This innovative project with children from grades 1 to 5, gave them a chance to play curator at the Queensland Museum, organising collections and preparing exhibition labels. The program helped children explore issues about the nature of collecting, and the work of museums. Starting with the idea of children as natural collectors, it brought together young people's collections stored in matchboxes, devised a performance focussing on the naturalist Charles Darwin, and developed an installation curated by children. The idea was to help children explore fundamental questions about why and how museums assemble and organise collections, and what they tell us about ourselves.

7.6 Toys and children's rooms

Old toys do not necessarily speak to children today. They are really special antiques, too fragile to be handled, and of more interest to adults than children. Additionally, museums are only offered toys long after the child has grown up, when we can't find out enough about who owned them and what the toy meant to the child. Photographs showing children playing with toys are a great resource, containing a wealth of information about the home, class and culture of the owner. Unfortunately, there are few toys in museum collections documented in this way. Toys that are provenanced with a photograph of the child playing with it are more interesting and significant for museums.

Although old toys are generally too fragile to be used, the toy collection can inspire activities exploring changes in play, and help children and families photograph and record toy stories. For example:

- 1 Document and exhibit homemade toys from your locality, and record community memories of improvised toys.
- 2 Copy family photographs of children playing with toys.
- 3 Set up a project to record toys and play in 2001, encouraging children to identify one of their toys and write a label about how and why they like it. The toys with the children's labels could be put on temporary exhibition and the results documented for the museum's archives.
- 4 Develop a community photograph exhibition by asking families to photograph their child playing with a toy, with the child writing a caption about why they like the toy and how they play with it.
- 5 Ask children to draw or paint themselves playing with a favourite toy and write a label for their picture.
- 6 Hold a school holiday activity for children to make their own toys based on ones in the collection, or improvised from recycled materials.
- 7 Where practical, commission replicas or contemporary versions of toys in the collection so they can be handled.
- 8 Explore opportunities to incorporate toys and a play space in your exhibitions, relating the play to the subject of the exhibition. For example, an exhibition about shops and shopping could have a scale model of a shop, and an exhibition about quilts could have doll-sized versions, or toy sewing activities.

Another variation, perhaps for older children, is a project centred on children's rooms, either real or imagined. Invite local children to draw, photograph, design, model or describe their bedroom or a room they would like to have, detailing the kinds of furnishings, toys and objects found in it, and writing a label or caption for their entry. A range of modest prizes could be offered, perhaps sponsored by a local business. The entries could be exhibited and a selection kept in the museum's archives. Alternatively, hold an exhibition of images from the walls of children's bedrooms, with captions explaining why the image is important or attractive to them. Real children's rooms are rarely documented or photographed and the results of this project, and others suggested above, would leave a record of lasting interest.

8 Indigenous Australians

Museums have an important role to play in fostering reconciliation and understanding amongst Australians. As places that are recognised for their integrity and scholarship, museums can explore difficult and contentious issues in a safe environment, built on trust and mutual respect. With so much mistrust and misunderstanding in the political arena, museums need to use their skills and resources to make a positive contribution to contemporary debates. Many Australians have little contact with Indigenous people and certainly no dialogue, so museums can be a meeting place for cultures and ideas.

While Indigenous cultures have long been presented in museum displays, it is only in the last 30 years that we have recognised the obligation by museums to make Indigenous collections accessible, and enable Indigenous people to speak about their culture and objects in their own words. The results of this engagement are profoundly changing museum practice for the better. New forms of museums such as keeping places, developed and managed by Indigenous people, are influencing thinking about the purpose of collections and their role in cultural maintenance and education. In art galleries, the use of extended labels to interpret the meaning and symbolism of Aboriginal paintings, has helped change the conventions of gallery captions. Instead of a cryptic text about the artist, date and media, there are more extended labels that engage with the context and meaning of the picture.

Engagement with Indigenous people in museums is reinventing the museum and challenging in positive ways, old habits and practices. You can do it too.

Resource

Be familiar with Museums Australia's policies for working with Indigenous peoples: *Previous Possessions, New Obligations: A Plain English Summary of Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, 1996.

Consult the kit *Taking the Time: museums and galleries, cultural protocols and communities*, by Ann Baillie, Museums Australia (Qld), 1998. This excellent resource includes a copy of *Previous Possessions*, and advice about protocols, language, issues, ideas and successful case studies. A particularly useful section deals with common concerns and frequently asked questions.

8.1 Case Study

Aboriginal Perspectives on the past – James Cook Museum Cooktown

Like many museums, the James Cook Museum presented Aboriginal history as a traditional display of weapons and objects, isolated in a space separate from mining and pastoral history. By default, it gave the impression that Aboriginal history finished shortly after Cook's landing. However with a significant Federation grant, the National Trust of Queensland has redeveloped the museum and reconceptualised the way it presents history. Consultation with Aboriginal people from the region has revealed oral histories that provide alternate readings for important Cooktown themes, including Cook's arrival. Personal stories of friendships separated by missions and restrictions on movement, highlight the power and prejudice that confronted Aboriginal people on a daily basis. In the 1960s, after 6pm Aboriginal people had to go back to the Reserve, whose perimeter is still known as Boundary Street. The fence was erected and maintained by Aboriginal people. Paddy Bassano tells the story of having to fix the fence to keep himself in!



Eric Deeral, elder of the Gamay clan in the Guugu Yimithirr nation near Cooktown, telling designer Bill Haycock the story of Guugu Yimithirr people sighting and meeting captain Cook in June 1770.

Image courtesy James Cook Museum Cooktown.

8.2 Working with Indigenous communities – Resources, tips and ideas

Recognise that it takes time to build relationships and see it as a long-term commitment. Start small to build trust and confidence.

- Try story-telling in the museum, or craft- or music-making activities.
- Participate in community events such as NAIDOC Week, and local reconciliation activities.

- Understand that Indigenous people may have higher priorities than helping the museum.
- Ask Indigenous people what issues and stories they would like to see presented in the museum.
- Concentrate on telling specific local stories rather than generalising. Where appropriate identify and name Indigenous people and present individual and family biographies. Identify local heroes, stories of resistance, murder, misunderstanding, co-operation and good will.
- Work with local Indigenous people to help them research family history.
- Explore what happened to local Aboriginal people after European settlement. How did they survive the impact of colonisation?
- As far as possible, enable Indigenous people to tell their stories in their own words.
- Work with Indigenous people to develop captions for historic photographs, presenting their side of the story, or alternative points-of-view.
- Invite a guest curator or artist to reinterpret a theme or collection.
- Seek approval of exhibition concepts, text and photographs. Allow plenty of time for consultation.
- Share information and research about your collection with local Indigenous groups. Invite them to look at the collection.
- With permission, record Indigenous perspectives on the objects in the museum's collection catalogue.
- Explore opportunities for the museum to act as a keeping place, through a partnership or cultural agreement.
- Be aware of copyright issues and respect cultural sensitivities with certain objects and issues.
- Ask what the museum can do for Indigenous groups, not what they can do for the museum.
- Don't just confine Indigenous history to specifically Indigenous exhibitions and spaces. Look for opportunities to profile Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout the museum and its exhibits.
- Develop some thematic displays that include Indigenous people and perspectives. Their experience was usually very different from the way the past was experienced by European settlers. For example, education, health, housing, food, the war, family life, motherhood, childhood, agriculture, etc.
- Support reconciliation by building understanding about the facts of colonisation and the experience of dispossession.

Resource

For useful information about language and terminology for Indigenous history and exhibitions see: 'Appropriate

Terminology for Indigenous History and Cultures in Museums', 6.8 in *Museum Methods, A practical manual for Managing Small Museums*, Museums Australia Inc (NSW). See also section 7 on Indigenous issues for museums.

Case Study

One Family: Many Faces – Yugambeh Museum Language-Heritage Research Centre

Sometimes the museum may not have collections or information about recent Indigenous history, but even without collections there are many ways to create exhibitions that develop research and present Indigenous people and their stories. The Yugambeh Museum Language-Heritage Research Centre developed a documentation and exhibition project to record contemporary Aboriginal people of the Beenleigh area. Titled *One Family: Many Faces* the project employed a photographer to take portraits of 120 people, and a questionnaire to ask people about their family history, personal stories and aspirations for the future. It is both an exhibition for today and a record of Indigenous people and their stories for the future.

Case Study

Houses and Humpies – Surat Cobb & Co Changing Station

Since it opened in 1997, the Surat Cobb & Co Changing Station has mounted some highly innovative exhibitions based on community partnerships. Notable among these is *Houses and Humpies* developed in association with the Surat Aboriginal Family History Group. The exhibition recreates some of the Aboriginal houses and humpies that lined the Balonne River bank, and these are used as the setting to interpret the way of life and family stories of a number of local Aboriginal families. Such projects increase community understanding of the experience of Aboriginal people living under the Act. The exhibition is touring in 2001-2002.



*Houses and Humpies, an exhibition produced in partnership with the Surat Aboriginal Family History Group.
Image courtesy Surat Cobb & Co. Changing Station*



Multiculturalism

It's easy to think of multiculturalism in terms of post-war migrants and contentious debates on immigration, but Australia has been a multicultural country since 1788, and in some senses long before that date. From the beginnings of European settlement, the port cities of the east coast from Cooktown down to Hobart, were profoundly multicultural places; so too were mining settlements, and they are still some of Australia's most diverse communities. Nineteenth century travellers remarked on the many languages and diverse people seen and heard in the streets of Sydney and other ports. Today local cemeteries and museum collections both show evidence of this mix of people and cultures.

Looking at the people behind the story of British colonisation and settlement we find Irish, English, Welsh, Scottish, Cornish and many other ethnic and cultural groups. Although we might think of these groups today as British, they each carried to Australia a distinctive culture reflected in their language, beliefs, working patterns and domestic practices. Every family whose forbears arrived in Australia after 1788 is part of the story of multiculturalism in Australia, and most family histories describe a common pattern of journey, settlement, struggles and successes in a new land.

9.1 Take stock of the collection

How well does the museum's collection represent the diverse people of your locality? Identify the migrant groups who have contributed to the history and development of your area, not just in the distant past but more recently too. Then review your collection and list which objects help illustrate their role in your area's history. You can use this analysis to redress omissions and silences in the collection and to plan new exhibitions that strategically focus resources on neglected aspects of history.

This doesn't necessarily mean acquiring lots of objects, or asking migrant groups to part with important items. You can use the museum's skills and resources to document community collections and assist the owners to conserve them in their family or community context. For example, the Powerhouse Museum worked with the Yui Ming Society, owners of a Chinese temple complex in inner city Sydney, on a conservation survey of the temple and its artefacts. The result was a detailed record of the temple complex and a bilingual oral history about the people and the place. A temporary exhibition and catalogue 'opened' the temple to a wider audience through the Powerhouse Museum, but importantly the process of study and documentation equipped the community to care for the collection in the context where it has most significance.

9.2 Thematic displays about people and cultures

Multiculturalism does not have to be seen just in terms of ethnically specific exhibitions and programs (ie Chinese, Italian, German etc.), although these are certainly very rich subjects for museums. A thematic approach can be used to explore different perspectives and cultural practices, based around a topic or aspect of life that is experienced by many groups. Reflecting on a common theme and exploring how it was experienced by different ethnic groups, is a good way for museums to bring communities and cultures together and build mutual respect and understanding.

For example, displays and public programs themed around life cycle rituals can be designed to reflect distinctive ethnic, religious and cultural practices, while exploring what we have in common. This includes birth and naming ceremonies; coming of age or coming out; marriage, trousseaux and glory boxes; and death and burial. Rites of passage are moments of great significance in family history and both museums and family collections are rich in these objects and associated documentary material. Each one of these 'passages' is a strong theme for exhibitions and public programs.

Below are some other themes or subjects that museums can use to recognise and interpret the diversity of people and cultures in their locality. These topics also provide a framework to refresh and refocus the interpretation of familiar collections, and to link the objects with contemporary society. Linking the theme with contemporary life also helps the museum reach new audiences in the community. Museums can use any one of these possible projects to photograph and document aspects of contemporary social life that would not otherwise be represented in public records in the future. Schools and young people can be involved in doing this work too.

- **Bread and cakes** – a rich subject for tempting demonstrations, recipe swapping and field trips. Most historical collections include objects relating to bread, and links can be made to inspect sites such as flourmills, cake shops, and bakeries in the region. The ceremonial and celebratory aspects of cake and bread should not be overlooked. This topic also naturally encompasses bush tucker grains and Aboriginal grinding stones.
- **The rituals of dinner and the material culture of the table** – including the change from the formal Sunday lunch to the bar-be-que.
- **Meat** – see above – more tasty public programs.

- **Picnics** – includes food, equipment, clothing, favourite picnic places, celebrations and community events.
- **Backyards, sheds and gardens** – these have seen many changes in the last 100 years. Various ethnic groups have greatly enriched our domestic landscape and gardening practices. Very few museums collect the material culture of the backyard and gardening, but material can be borrowed for the exhibition or event, including tools, garden ornaments, furniture, pots, pet kennels and certain fixtures. There is also a wealth of information in family photographs that can be copied for the museum's records. Talk back radio or a story in your local paper will unleash a flood of stories. This is a great subject to link up with spring garden festivals, garden society events, disappearing market gardens and historic houses.
- **Music** – instruments and organisations, brass bands then and now, sacred music of various faiths, domestic parlour music, music teaching, youth music of today and the last 50 years. Link to performance places in the community – from bandstands to garages.
- **Portraits** – images of families and people are recorded in many ways from oil paintings to passports, from wedding photographs to police descriptions, from impressions of newborn babies' feet to obituaries. Museums and galleries have significant collections of portraits but these are rarely interpreted in ways that make connections with multiculturalism, or question the hidden hierarchies in the portrait records. Hold an exhibition which canvases all the different ways that history has recorded images of the people of your district. Omissions and silences can also be suggested through silhouettes and shadows.
- **Journeys** - stories of how and why families came to the district, then and now.
- **Shops and cafes** - these were often the first points of contact between cultures, and an important service to the community. Many non-English speaking migrants still find their feet economically by opening shops and cafes.
- **Sewing and embroidery** – needlework is one of the few elements of material culture that is shared across classes and cultures. Up until recently almost all women (and many men) learnt to sew and sewed regularly. Sewing machines and embroidery are commonly represented in museum collections, but are not well interpreted or connected to the women who used and made them, nor to their ethnicity.

Almost all of these themes and related projects can include an Indigenous perspective.

9.3 Hints and Tips

- Don't expect migrant groups to give or lend the museum precious items, or to automatically tell you their life story. It takes time to build trust and establish a relationship. Start with a simple occasion or activity, such as celebrating a national anniversary, and build up to a more demanding exhibition.
- Remember that ethnic groups are not homogenous. Men and women will have different experiences and perspectives on a subject or theme. So too will the young and old, and those from different classes, and attitudes may be shaped by when and how the person or group arrived in Australia. Therefore avoid generalising about ethnic groups by focussing on individuals or particular families and their stories.
- Involve schools and young people in documenting and recording contemporary elements of the theme for exhibition and archiving, either by the museum or your local studies library.
- Have a public appeal for contemporary stories, photographs and objects and include some current images in the display. Use the appeal to promote the display. With the permission of the owners, copy photographs and records in family collections.
- Engage local artists and craftspeople to create works for the display and the shop, and to develop and lead public programs.
- Artists can also be commissioned to interpret aspects of the theme that may not have survived in collections or photographs. This can help bring hidden histories into the open.
- Seek opportunities to program your display in conjunction with events in your local community, such as a food or music festival, a season or harvest. Many larger councils have an events calendar which will give you ideas for spin-off programs. Get in touch with the organisers (well in advance of the date) to promote your display or activity and include the museum as a side trip.
- Consider opportunities to visit places and sites in the locality connected with the theme, and show these in the exhibition or catalogue.
- Include at least some labels and exhibition text in the language of the ethnic group. Enable the cultural owners of the material to tell their story and interpret the objects in their own words.

Resource

Detailed advice for projects and partnerships with Indigenous, migrant and ethnic groups can be found in *Taking the Time: museums and galleries, cultural protocols and communities*, Museums Australia (Qld) 1998.

Case Study

Refined White *travelling exhibition* – *Australian Sugar Industry Museum*

Refined White explores the contribution of South Sea Islanders to the sugar industry, and their experience of, among other things, the White Australia policy. Confronting difficult histories and complex questions, project curator Michael Berry writes: *the challenge for Refined White will be to ask young people to weigh up the rhetoric and individual words of the time; to sift through concepts of civil and human rights; and to examine notions of decency and a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.*

Quoted in *ARTeFACT*, Museums Australia (Qld), Vol 5, No 2, June 2000

Case Study

Italian Influence on the Granite Belt – *Stanthorpe & District Historical Society*

Engagement with migrant communities enriches the museum in all sorts of unexpected ways, as the Stanthorpe and District Historical Society found with their project about the Italian Influence on the Granite Belt. Working with senior members of the Italian community, the project copied photographs, recorded oral histories and mounted an exhibition with the active participation of the Italian community around Stanthorpe. In the three month preparation phase, the local newspaper ran a weekly story about the exhibition, building awareness of the event and generating information, photographs and offers of donation. Members of the Italian community also wrote about the project in an Italian language paper. The Museum dedicated an Italian room to exhibit the photographs, objects and stories, and this opened in conjunction with a Heritage Day, judged one of the museum's best fund-raisers. The whole project has generated new stories and photographs for the museum's records, donations to the collection, increased visitors, and new members and volunteers.



Food and entertainment – Italian-style – at the Stanthorpe & District Historical Society Heritage Day.
Image courtesy Stanthorpe & District Historical Society

Case Study

German settlers in the Mt Cotton area – *Redland Museum*

The arrival of particular ethnic or cultural groups is often a turning point in the history and development of a region, whether this happened in the 1870s or the 1970s.

The Redland Museum in Cleveland explored the history of the German settlement of Mt Cotton in southeast Queensland in their exhibition 'Deutsche Auswanderer* – Hope and Reality'. The exhibition showed, among other things, how the beliefs, traditions, domestic practices and working tools of the German emigrants are reflected in their material culture. An exhibition catalogue of the same name, written by Diane Moon and Joyce Krause, explores the journey, struggles, culture, families and contribution of the German migrants to the Mt Cotton area. Well-researched publications like this help to keep the images and stories of the German families in the public domain long after the exhibition has been dismantled.

* German emigrants

Resources

The best starting point for working with ethnic and cultural groups is *Taking the Time: museums and galleries, cultural protocols and communities*, Museums Australia (Qld), 1998. Written by Ann Baillie, this guide is full of practical advice and good ideas from some of Australia's most innovative curators. Protocol tips and pointers to good communication help you think through your project and avoid hidden pitfalls.

See also discussion, articles and case studies about cultural diversity in:

ARTeFACT, Vol 5, No 1, March 2000

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Online resources

Australian Museums On Line – <http://amol.org.au>
 Museums Australia (Qld) – www.maq.org.au

- AMOL** Australian Museums On Line, an internet-based national database and information resource about Australian museums and collections. AMOL has been developed under the Heritage Collections Council (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts) and includes collection databases and storylines and a directory of museums, information and resources for museum workers.
- checklist** A list of the main types of objects found within particular collection or subject areas. They can be used in collection surveys or thematic studies to help to make the survey more systematic, and identify weaknesses and omissions in the collecting record.
- collection policy** A formally approved policy document that defines how, why, what and in which circumstances museums acquire and dispose of objects. The collection policy is based on the museum's mission and purpose. It defines the scope, themes and range of the museum's collecting interests and sets criteria and procedures for acquisition, documentation, management, loans, deaccession and disposal of objects.
- conservation** All the processes of looking after an object or collection so as to retain its cultural significance, including the way the item is managed and stored, as well as treatment of its fabric.
- contextual history** A commissioned history exploring the processes and issues that have shaped the movable heritage of an industry, issue or region; including the identification of themes to provide a framework for analysing the collections.
- deaccession** To remove an item from a collection according to a formally approved policy, procedures and set of criteria. The deaccessioning process may include public consultation, a twelve month holding period for review, and contact with the donors where known. The process is fully documented to clearly explain why and how the item is being removed from the collection and disposed of. Deaccession policies are an essential component in a collection policy.
- Heritage Collections Council (HCC)**
A body of museum representatives organised under the Cultural Ministers Council to co-ordinate national policies and programs to promote access to Australia's heritage collections, and excellence in collection management.
- historic themes**
The main activities, processes or subjects that have shaped the history of a region, issue or industry. They are identified through research and analysis as part of a contextual history. Historic themes provide a framework for analysing collections and movable heritage, helping to identify significant objects and pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of collections.
- in situ** Objects, collections and other heritage items remaining in their context of use or place.
- interpretation** All of the ways that museums communicate the meaning of their objects and collections to enable visitors to understand their significance.
- movable heritage**
Any natural or manufactured object of heritage significance, including objects in museums.
- provenance** The life-story of an object or collection – especially the origin, history, use and associations, ideally with supporting documentation, such as accounts of its use and chain of ownership. In situ collections have some degree of provenance by virtue of the surviving context.
- public programs**
Activities, events, performances, demonstrations and educational programs to engage visitors of all ages and add value to their experience and understanding of exhibitions, museums and collections.
- significance** The meaning and value of an object or heritage item; particularly the historic, aesthetic, scientific or social values that an object, collection or heritage item has for past, present or future generations.

significance assessment

The process of analysing and identifying the meaning and values of an object or collection. Significance assessment is judged against a set of criteria: historic, aesthetic, scientific and social or spiritual value; and further evaluated against five comparative criteria to estimate the degree of significance: provenance, representativeness, rarity, condition and interpretive potential.

themes

Activities, processes, patterns of use or development; themes are a way of understanding and analysing collections by relating objects to their wider context, function and meaning. They help structure exhibitions and focus interpretation to help visitors appreciate the significance of objects and collections.

thematic framework

A set of themes relating to a subject, region, industry or activity that provide a framework or grid for analysing heritage items. See Part A for examples. You can use these existing state or national frameworks or develop a thematic framework particular to your study area.

thematic study

A survey of heritage items related to a particular theme or subject, designed to develop an understanding of the significant objects, collections or heritage items associated with the theme. The thematic study establishes the significance of the key objects, identifies priorities for conservation action, and helps to improve displays and interpretation.

part**three**

MARKETING & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

by Dr Sharron Dickman



1 *Developing the Project*

Events have become a part of our culture. They identify important milestones for individuals (birthdays, weddings, funerals) and they are also an important part of how organisations, communities and nations acknowledge their beliefs and values.

They reflect the interests, priorities and concerns of a museum or gallery, and provide an opportunity for it to present something to the community which it will enjoy, but will also provide an opportunity for it to reflect on where they've come from and where they're going.

Events don't just happen. Successful events are the result of creative vision and hard work. They often bring together people who would not normally work together and while it is usually only for a short, fixed period, the impact can last long after the exhibition has closed, the parade has finished, or the festival tents have been taken down.

Events can be an excellent way to create awareness and interest in your museum or gallery, and the event or exhibition can focus attention on your community's history, the role of individuals or groups in the development of the town, and the issues that are of concern to its future prosperity. Events can ensure that important experiences are remembered and passed on to future generations.

The publicity generated can build interest and excitement, encourage others to become involved and may even attract visitors and tourists to your event.

If your organisation has decided to hold an event, it will be important to take time, early on, to consider what you want to do, and what you hope to achieve. Events related to the Centenary of Federation will provide an opportunity to explore a wide range of historic and contemporary issues. Good planning will ensure your event's success, and that starts with a clear vision of who your audience is and what you want to achieve.

Some key questions your museum or gallery should discuss before agreeing to stage an event are:

- **Why do you want to stage this event?** What do you plan to achieve? What sort of theme ideas do you have? Is your event based on a specific Centenary of Federation theme – land, water, environment, youth, multiculturalism, indigenous people? Are you going to focus on a special physical feature of your area, a particular incident in your history, or special items in your collection?
- **What, exactly, do you have in mind** – an exhibition, live performances, films, demonstrations, re-enactments, concerts, lectures, competitions, stalls,

readings or recitations, a full festival program, activities, sound and light shows, audience participation (for adults or children)?

- **Is the event a good idea?** What will be the community benefits? The educational benefits? The social benefits? The economic benefits? Will it bring the community together? Will it provide an opportunity for linking groups which may not normally have much in common? Will it provide the community with new, useful, interesting or compelling information? Will it stimulate debate and discussion? Will the community support the event?
- **Who will your audience be?** Will you present this event to your "traditional" audience? Will you try to reach new audiences? Will you approach schools? Youth groups? Older citizens? The disadvantaged? Will it be of interest to tourists or people from other regional centres?
- **How can we expand our existing audience base through this event?** If you are going to approach new audiences, you may have to put extra time and effort into identifying the best way to reach them. You may also need to recruit helpers or committee members from these other groups to maximise your effectiveness.

This could be an ideal opportunity to reach out to new people in your community and get them interested in what you do. You might set up a website design competition for older secondary students, or a poster colour competition for schoolchildren, or invite community members to contribute items for a display. You might invite local ethnic dance groups to perform during the exhibition, or serve traditional foods at the opening.

- **Where will it be held?** Will you put on the event at your museum or gallery? If so, do you have the space, equipment and security to run the event at your own premises? Will you need additional equipment? Will you use a local park, hall or civic centre, or some other historic venue? Will it be indoors or outside? Will you go off-site with your exhibition or event? Events are an ideal opportunity to extend your audiences and bring new people to your museum or gallery – or to take your museum to new places such as shopping centres, agricultural shows, community centres, schools or youth clubs. Will people know where the venue is? Is it accessible to everyone?
- **When will you hold your event?** Times, days, dates, season of the year? Will you plan your Centenary of Federation event to coincide with the monthly

schedule of events in Queensland (see Part One) or will you plan a date that is convenient in terms of your own community? How long will your event/exhibition last? If you are having a special exhibition, will you extend your visiting hours during the exhibition or have special evening openings?

Will you hold your event at the same time other Centenary activities are happening or on its own? Will it clash with any other major regional or community activities or events? You probably don't want to run an education event during secondary school exam times when students will not be able to attend, or run a special two-day event that clashes with a major local sporting event.

On the other hand, if your exhibition has a sporting theme, running it right before or right after a major sporting event might increase the level of interest and awareness – or you might consider promoting the exhibition at the sporting venue, and opening the exhibition after the event so people could do both in the same day.

Check with other organisations to make sure you won't be clashing with other events, and work with them to find ways you might link your activities.

- Does your organisation have the planning, organising and marketing skills to undertake the event? It will be important to have a core group of people who are willing and able to work on the project. It may mean finding new volunteers, or asking existing volunteers to either take on additional work, or change what they are currently doing. A successful event usually requires input from people with financial skills, marketing expertise, exhibition knowledge and practical operations skills. It may also be important to have ready access to someone with legal knowledge.
- Can you afford to stage the event? How much money will it cost to do it properly? Do you have the money? Can your organisation attract sponsorship, donations, in-kind support? It is important to be realistic about the money required. A poorly run event, or event which is badly managed because there isn't sufficient funds to do the job correctly, may create negative community reactions.
- Will you be able to promote the event? Will it generate media interest? Will you be able to get coverage in your local paper, or on radio or television? Will the event involve something rare, unique, unusual or will celebrities or visiting dignitaries be involved? You will probably need to promote your event to let people know it is on and get them to come. It would be dreadful if you

actually planned a really good event, but then lacked the wherewithal to let people know it was happening.

- What success criteria will you set up? How will you judge the success of your event? Will you count visitor numbers? Will you have evaluation questionnaires? Do you intend to raise a certain amount of money?

Event concept checklist

Key questions for you and your committee:

- Why do we want to stage this event?
- Is the event a good idea?
- Who will our audience be?
- How can we expand our existing audience base through this event?
- Where will it be held?
- When will it be held?
- Does our organisation have the necessary skills?
- Can we afford to stage the event?
- Will we be able to promote the event?
- What success criteria will we set up?

2 Audience strategies

Events and activities need audiences to be successful. Therefore, events need to be designed to satisfy identified needs of potential target audiences. The importance of identifying target audiences cannot be overemphasised.

Not all events appeal to all segments of the general public. Not everyone goes to sporting events, and even people who enjoy tennis may not enjoy motor racing, polo or football. For some events the market will, indeed, be very specialised – for example, foreign film retrospectives, steam rallies, or exhibitions of handmade lace. Although many people enjoy ballet, opera or jazz festivals, they do not have “universal” appeal.

Identifying the segments of the population who are likely to enjoy your special event or festival is critical. “Niche” markets can be large or small, local or international. The more we know about our markets the better we will be able to make important decisions about the prices we charge, the most suitable venues or locations, even the best sponsors to approach and the most effective media (newspapers, television, special interest magazines) to promote the event.

Think of your event in terms of who you want to reach, and why they might decide to attend. Some basic audiences would include:

- local residents
- individuals/groups from other cultural backgrounds
- family groups
- men
- women
- schoolchildren (primary)
- teenagers
- senior citizens
- day visitors from the region
- international visitors

They might choose to attend your event because it offers:

- an opportunity to socialise – an event which provides an opportunity for people to get together with their family, friends or other members of the community to enjoy themselves (a festival with entertainment, an exhibition with storytelling or poetry readings)
- an opportunity for family togetherness – something the family can do as a group (a campfire storytelling of bush yarns, a bushwalk to identify rare native plants, an exhibition with a demonstration on how to carve wooden animals)

- an educational experience – an opportunity for them to learn something new (a lecture on how to research your family history, a walking tour of the historic sites of the town and stories about events that occurred at those sites)
- an opportunity to do something unusual or novel – the event may give them a chance to do something different (learn ethnic dancing, or try ethnic foods, dress in period costume, sing in a community choir)
- an escape – getting away from the usual demands of everyday life and doing something different (watching an historic re-enactment)

It is important to analyse your planned event in terms of who it will appeal to, and perhaps consider some additional activities or elements which will expand its appeal. You also need to consider how you will promote your event to these audiences. Where will you advertise? What should you say in your ads to attract your target audience?

Research undertaken on what various types of people look for in attending museums, galleries and events, can assist in developing your promotions. The more you can tailor your event to meet these needs, the more likely you will attract audiences.

Parents with young children value:

- worthwhile and educational experiences offered in an entertaining way
- experiences that transmit important cultural values
- experiences that offer a combination of physical and intellectual activity

Teachers with school groups value:

- experiences which link directly with key curriculum programs
- experiential learning
- new social experiences for students
- experiences that introduce them to other cultures (Aboriginal, migrant)
- well prepared education materials (handouts, exercise sheets, etc.)
- expansion of learning beyond the classroom
- a safe environment for students

Young adults value:

- experiences that let them get “behind the scenes”
- experiences that allow them to learn about relationships and how things fit together

- experiences that introduce them to other cultures (Aboriginal, migrant)
- experiences related to social values and cultural change
- experiences that look at both the past and the future
- experiences that allow them to make up their own mind about things
- things they can do as a group with friends

Adults value:

- experiences that enable them to expand, explore and discover
- experiences that reflect their personal and cultural past and present
- experiences that allow them to remember, regain and share
- experiences that introduce them to other cultures (Aboriginal, migrant)

Audience strategy development checklist

- Who are the target audiences for your event?
- How will your event appeal to these audiences?
- How can you promote your event to your target audiences to highlight their needs and interests?

3 *Organising committees*

Will you need an event organising committee?

The organising committee for your event/exhibition may be the same committee that is responsible for the everyday operation of your museum or gallery. However, your existing committee may decide that because of the amount of work involved, or the need for some special skills, it would be appropriate to appoint a committee to be specifically responsible for planning, organising and staging this one particular activity.

If there is money in the budget to hire an event organiser or manager, then the existing committee will act as employer/manager of that paid staff member. That person may take responsibility for a number of tasks including finances, but supervision will still be required. If you have received a grant or sponsorship, then your organisation (since it was the one that received the grant) still has the responsibility – including legal responsibility – to ensure the activity is undertaken in a professional and competent manner.

The size and composition of your event committee will be determined by the size of your event/exhibition, your budget and the amount of work involved.

Having a voluntary committee to work on this special event can be a very good way to get people involved in the activity, and create awareness and interest. The best committee members are those who have a passion for the arts, and in particular the work done by the organisation, and the event or activity being planned. But it is also helpful if they have business or organisational skills and good networks within the local community.

Problems can arise when committees are composed of very well-intentioned – but unfortunately, unskilled – people who lack the ability to actually ensure the special activity takes place within the budget and timeframe.

Issues to consider are:

- How large should the committee be? Usually effective committees are fairly small (5-8 people) as larger groups can sometimes become unwieldy. It can be hard to get everyone to meetings, and can create problems in terms of keeping everyone informed.
- What sort of work needs to be done? You will need people who are prepared to actively work on the project (help set up the exhibition space or make telephone calls to organise sponsorship, write and design programs or invitations, install exhibitions, etc.), but you may also need people with specific

skills, such as financial skills (to monitor budgets), publicity skills (to assist with writing media releases), or operational skills (to organise lighting or sound equipment).

- What committee structure do you want or need? You will probably need a chairperson to coordinate the committee's activities. Often this is someone who is directly related to the main organisation (the chairperson, executive director, director, a board member, or paid staff member).

A treasurer and secretary are also usually appointed or elected. The roles of these office-holders are obvious – the Chairperson will be in charge of meetings, the treasurer prepares and presents reports on the financial management of the activity, and the secretary takes notes on what happens at the meetings, circulates minutes (if these are required) and follows up necessary correspondence and communications.

- How often will the committee meet? The commitment to being on a committee will depend on the size of the event, the number of committee members and the time of the event. Usually committees meet frequently in the early stages when they are setting their goals and objectives, assigning tasks and planning the activity. Then meetings may be fewer in number while the committee members actually do the work which they have agreed to do.

Meetings generally increase in frequency in the period leading up to the actual event and there are usually one or two committee meetings after the event to ensure all account and outstanding issues are finalised, and that all assessments and evaluations have been completed and required reports prepared and presented. It is also a good idea to have a social event to thank the committee once the project has been completed.

Attracting volunteers to serve on the committee

How do we attract committee volunteers? Getting volunteers to assist on committees can be quite a challenge, especially in small communities where people are already committed to a number of activities including local schools, sporting groups, community groups and service clubs and welfare groups. Asking busy people to take on another task can seem difficult.

Your group could either directly approach individuals who you believe would be interested in the activity and

prepared to help, or you could call a meeting by putting a notice in the local newspaper, on the radio or television via a public service announcement, or publicising the meeting in your local library, local government offices or other gathering places.

You might also contact your local school, youth groups, service clubs, retail traders group or local residents association to invite them to a meeting to learn about the project and offer them the opportunity to participate.

Have an initial meeting to gather together everyone who may be interested. It will probably be useful to have some written information for people to take away, explaining the event and the role of the organising committee. You'll need someone to chair the meeting, someone to take minutes or notes (and to ensure you have the name and address of everyone who is interested in becoming involved).

It is a good idea to keep this first meeting fairly brief and to-the-point:

- Welcome – thank everyone for attending and explain why the meeting has been called
- Explain the event – what you hope to do and when, including any printed material you may have prepared
- Explain the need for a committee – and explain what type of assistance is needed
- Encourage discussion from the group – answer questions
- Ask for support and seek a commitment from people to support the activity
- Collect names and contact information
- Set a date for the next meeting
- Thank everyone for attending

Follow up this first meeting with another meeting in about a week to confirm people's commitment, and identify any other individuals or skill areas you need, elect or appoint office-holders and set the schedule for future meetings.

Using a project or event manager

As mentioned earlier, you may have money in the budget to hire an event coordinator. If so, you may either use someone with whom you have worked before, or hire someone to assist.

The event coordinator would probably take on responsibility for:

- reporting regularly to the event organising committee and attending committee meetings
- planning the event
- booking venues or hiring required equipment
- organising and recruiting volunteers
- managing the budget
- advertising, publicity and public relations
- liaison with relevant authorities and sponsors
- preparing any required reports for government funding authorities, sponsors, etc.

You will need to prepare a written agreement outlining what the duties of the event coordinator will be, how much and when they will be paid, and their general terms of employment. It is important to put these things in writing to avoid unpleasantness or problems in the future.

4 *Volunteer management*

Your existing volunteers may meet all your requirements for your special activity, but in some cases you will need to recruit additional volunteers. However, if the special event is one which your current volunteers would enjoy being involved in, be sure to consider their feelings. They may end up feeling hurt or disappointed if they miss out on something special after having contributed hard work throughout the year. On the other hand, recruiting volunteers for a special event gives your museum or gallery the opportunity to involve new people. This is an ideal opportunity to reach new groups or individuals.

Assessing the need for additional volunteers

Before recruiting additional volunteers for your event, consider the following:

- Why do you need volunteers?
- What – exactly – will the volunteers do?
- How many volunteers will you need?
- When will you need them? (Just during the event itself, to set up before, or take down exhibitions, etc. afterwards)
- How will the volunteers for this special event interact with your existing volunteers?
- Will you need a volunteer coordinator?
- What training, assistance or supervision will be required?
- What incentives or rewards will you offer volunteers? How will you recognise their contribution? (Free attendance at the event for themselves or their families, written thanks, awards or certificates, prizes, pre- or post-event parties, etc.)
- What volunteer policies will be put into place? Will you reimburse them for expenses? Provide identification, uniforms or costumes? Provide refreshments, transport, meals, amenities, reimburse them for telephone calls?

Many small organisations operate with only volunteer staff. In larger organisations existing volunteer programs are complementary to the work of paid staff and provide opportunities for the organisation to expand into new areas of service (education programs, for example), or develop special projects or events.

Extra volunteers can help ease the workload and ensure the special activities can be taken on without straining

the resources of the volunteers who are already involved, and perhaps who are very busy just handling their existing commitments.

While volunteers give their time to help an organisation and do not expect financial rewards, they certainly have expectations of some positive benefits coming from their involvement. It might be that they are interested in being a part of the event or exhibition, or that they hope to learn new skills, get out of the house and meet new people and share in some community social activity.

In addition to these benefits, there are practical issues to consider, such as the provision of uniforms or identification of some sort, reimbursement of expenses, ensuring safe working conditions and the provision of amenities (change rooms, tea and coffee facilities, etc.). It will be easier to recruit volunteers if you can provide clear information about volunteer benefits.

Volunteers need to understand exactly what is required of them. Written position descriptions help to avoid misunderstandings, and to make certain that all the things that need to be done are covered. Position descriptions do not need to be long, detailed documents – just a short paragraph covering the basics. Include:

- the number of volunteers required
- the required skills or qualifications (including both essential skills and desirable skills)
- a list of duties for volunteers
- reporting and liaison requirements (to whom, how often, why)
- days and times required
- training requirements

Recruiting volunteers

There are three main ways to recruit volunteers:

Direct

Approach people and ask them to be volunteers.

Indirect

Run articles in the community newspaper, put up posters, put information on the internet, go on local radio and television asking for assistance.

If you do get a good response you may need to implement a process for checking your volunteers. You may already know most of them, and certainly most people who volunteer are well-intentioned and genuine, but there can be problems.

If you receive offers of help from people you don't know, you may need to undertake a reference check. If your volunteers will be working unsupervised with young people, the disadvantaged, or in sensitive areas, they should be asked to undergo a police check. Police checks are done in accordance with strict guidelines to ensure confidentiality. The use of police checks should be explained to potential volunteers in printed material or during initial discussions.

Delegated

Ask other groups or individuals for help. For example, Rotary, Lions and Apex, local sporting clubs or schools often provide assistance for special events. You might also contact senior citizens groups, teachers and work experience program coordinators.

Getting other community groups involved is also a very good way to increase community support for your event. Event organisers say that community involvement can either make or break an event, and the more the local community is involved through volunteering the more successful the event will be.

Legal responsibilities

Volunteers will require insurance cover. You may need to check your organisation's existing policy to ensure that volunteers involved in special events or exhibitions (especially if they are away from your usual premises) are covered. Also check details on the coverage in terms of the age of volunteers — are older volunteers (over 70) and children (if you use them) covered? Daily attendance and activity records should be kept, and if there is an accident or incident, it should be reported and documented.

Recognising and rewarding volunteers

Volunteers do not expect to be paid for their services, but they do expect their work to be valued and appreciated. They may be looking for opportunities to meet and mix with others, to share and pass on their experience and skills, or to learn new skills or improve their skills in particular areas (for example, public speaking, exhibition design, public relations, label writing), and to mix with people who have similar interests.

It is important to try as best you can to match volunteer's interests with the required tasks. If an older person, living alone, volunteers to help at a temporary art exhibition because they want to meet and talk with people, then asking them to work from home mailing out brochures will not be rewarding. A retired teacher shouldn't be asked to file receipts if he/she has expressed an interest in preparing education materials for a planned re-enactment.

There are a variety of "rewards" which you can offer

volunteers, including:

- tickets to a special activity (if there is going to be a charge)
- special event activities specifically for them
- written references acknowledging their contribution
- awards or certificates
- opportunities to meet celebrities, VIPs
- opportunities to meet other volunteers
- end of event/activity parties
- attractive uniforms or identification

However, don't forget the most obvious, inexpensive and valuable reward of all — a sincere thankyou to volunteers for their help.

5

Financial management and responsibilities

In order to have a successful special event or activity you will have to develop, and stick to, a budget. Preparing a budget is not really a difficult activity, and it is important to be sure you know what to expect. You don't want to finish the event, and have everyone tell you how much they enjoyed it, and how successful it was, only to learn later that you have overspent the budget and your organisation – which has precious little funds anyway – is going to have to meet the cash shortfall.

If you haven't prepared a budget before, or if you need help, you can get advice from your Museum Development Officer, arts or cultural officers at your local council, or from board members or committee members with financial experience.

The key to a successful budget is to be realistic about prices and costs, and to include everything. Most budgets are fully calculated, and then an extra sum of money is put aside as a contingency (emergency money, just in case you've missed something or miscalculated).

Funding bodies are particularly concerned that organisations who get funding have prepared proper budgets and will stick to them. They usually don't have additional funds to help you out if you get into trouble later. However, with a good budget that is unlikely to happen. If you discover in the early stages that you don't have enough money to do everything you'd hoped to do, you'll have time to plan on the best place to make cuts – or to look for ways to increase sponsorship.

The other element of good financial management is to be very careful about both the money that comes in and the money that goes out. Whoever handles the money must ensure it is banked promptly and properly and that all invoices and receipts are kept (including petty cash spending). It is also important to be very clear about who is authorised to spend money or approve purchases.

Many funding authorities have quite stringent reporting requirements to ensure the money they have contributed is fully accounted for, so you'll need to check what is required. It may be that you will need to have your final accounts audited by an accountant.

The budget and the level of detail required in financial planning will vary greatly with the type and size of event. If your organisation is planning a simple temporary exhibition of materials from your own collection, to be displayed in your own premises, then your expenses may be quite modest and your financial management issues very straightforward (and probably focus mainly on set-up costs for the exhibition) – framing, labels, handouts or leaflets, etc. – as well as advertising. On the other

hand, if you are planning a major festival with parades, street fairs and performances, then you will have major financial and budget responsibilities.

There are six key areas of costs for special events and festivals:

- venue costs and rental charges (including permits, equipment, venue hire, marquees, cleaning, etc.)
- security and insurance costs (including contribution to St. John Ambulance, police and emergency services, private security companies, insurance)
- production costs (set design, lighting and other equipment, props, etc.)
- labour costs (staff, performers, cleaners, etc. – and don't forget the extras: refreshments, parking, T-shirts for volunteers, etc.)
- merchandising costs (producing souvenirs, programs, etc.)
- marketing costs (advertising and promotions)
- administration (telephone, photocopying, printing, etc.)

There are also a number of revenue sources, including:

- ticket/admission charges
- advertising revenue
- grants, donations and sponsorships
- concessions
- merchandising

However, we can't always calculate precisely what our revenue will be. (How many people will actually show up on the day and buy tickets? How popular will our souvenirs be? Will our T-shirts, baseball caps and programs sell? How much will we get from food concessions?) But we can keep careful control of our expenses and calculate them very accurately.

Even if your event is not going to be run as a profit making project, you will need to work to either a break-even situation (you bring in as much money as you've spent) or you need to stay within the budget allocated through your grant or other donations.

For most special events and activities the major problem is cash flow. Expenditure is required before the money comes in from the event itself. You have to pay in advance for advertising, printing, venue hire deposits, merchandise – but ticket sales, grants, etc. may not come at the same time. It won't help your museum's or gallery's image in the community if you leave bills unpaid for a considerable time while you try to sort out your cash flow.

You may want to consider selling some tickets in advance, or negotiating with sponsors and grant authorities to release money at regular intervals to meet your costs.

Budget checklist

Your budget may not necessarily include all these things, but this checklist will remind you of what to include, and help ensure you don't forget anything major.

Income:

- Ticket sales
- Grants
- Donations
- Sponsorship
- Advertising (catalogue, program)
- Merchandise
- Concessions (stallholders' fees)

Expenditure:

- Salaries and on-costs (if an event coordinator is used, or existing paid staff are spending time on this project — include full-time, part-time or casual staff)
- Administration
- Telephone, fax, email
- Photocopying
- Postage
- Stationery
- General administration
- Travel costs
- Insurance and workers' compensation
- Permits (raffle permits, liquor permits, park or site hiring permits)
- Audit and accounting fees
- Bank charges (if you have to set up separate accounts to comply with grant requirements)
- Legal fees

Promotions:

- Printing (programs, posters, leaflets)
- Design
- Press advertising
- Radio advertising
- Media events
- Publicity activities (competitions, etc.)
- Launch and/or closing event

- Internet (web site design and set-up)
- Film and photography (for your own record of the event)

Program/event:

- Venue hire
- Venue staff (ushers, ticket sellers, stage crew)
- Other hiring requirements (portable 'loos, etc.)
- Security
- Signage (entry, parking, information, security and lost children, etc.)
- Cleaning
- Equipment hire (tables, chairs, generators, sound, stage, lighting, speakers, etc.)
- Artists' fees
- Artists' accommodation
- Artists' travel
- Performing fees (copyright, etc.)

Exhibition:

- Curator's fees
- Travel expenses — curator
- Catalogue (preparing, printing)
- Development of educational material
- Photography (catalogue, education materials, condition reports, publicity)
- Crating and packing
- Display equipment (cases, etc., hire or purchase)
- Mounting, framing, deframing
- Shipping
- Labels and signage
- Transport
- Insurance (transport and in-situ)
- Exhibition hire fee
- Security
- Venue fees (including venue staff if required)
- Equipment hire
- Cleaning fees

Contingency (about 10% of total)



6 *Site selection, venue organisation and management*

If you decide to hold your event at your museum or gallery, your decision about site selection and venue management will be simplified. You know the constraints of working there, in terms of space, facilities, etc. However, if you decide to hold your event off-site you will have some major decisions to make.

The range of potential venues is almost limitless. You could choose indoor or outdoor locations. You could pick the centre of the city or a remote natural location, parks or gardens, sporting ovals, community halls, theatres, performing arts centres, other museums or galleries, library foyers – the list goes on and on.

However, there are key issues you should consider when considering a site for your event:

- **What permits will you require?** Street closures? Parks and gardens hire charges? Parking permits, food stall or liquor licencing permits? Permits for temporary structures? If you're having music, what rules are there about noise levels and amplification?
- **What charges are involved?** Hiring a venue may require a permit from the local parks department, or it could involve entering into a detailed contract with a conference or convention centre. Costs are a critical issue. You need to know the basic hire costs, but also any additional requirements (security, cleaning, conference centre staff, catering, power, etc.). You will need to ask questions and read agreements.
- **Parking and access** – how easy will it be for people to get to your event? How easy will it be for you to move the equipment and volunteers, stallholders, etc. to set up and close down? How far will people have to walk from the car parking area to the event? (Generally speaking the shorter the distance the better!) What provisions can you make for parking for disabled or elderly people, or for coach groups?
- **What signage will you need?** If you are setting up in an unfamiliar location, or a park or reserve, you'll need extra signage for parking, toilets, lost children, disabled facilities, first aid, information, security, etc.
- **What security will you need?** If your event includes the sale of alcohol, if money (admissions, change, contributions) will be on site, how will it be kept secure? What security is required for equipment, displays, etc? If your event lasts more than one day, what overnight security is required for the site?
- **What toilet facilities are there?** Toilet facilities are a very important issue. Will you need to hire toilets? How many? (The rule of thumb is one toilet for about every 90-100 people). Will you need baby change rooms or parents' facilities? If you are using a park, oval, etc. with toilet facilities, what arrangements need to be made to ensure they are cleaned, stocked, checked?
- **What first aid facilities are available** or do you have to make your own arrangements? What emergency equipment is on hand? Must the fire brigade be there? St. John Ambulance? What emergency communications equipment is on hand? Telephones? Two-way radio?
- **What arrangements have to be made to keep the site clean** – putting extra rubbish bins in place, removing rubbish as it accumulates, cleaning the site and repairing any damage?
- **What major equipment is required** – such as tents, marquees, tables and chairs, food service and food handling equipment? What power requirements will there be? Will access to water be required? Will you need refrigeration? Will you need to erect a stage? Set up sound equipment? Hire lighting? Hire fans or cooling equipment?
- **What access will you have to the venue before and after the event?** How much time will you have to set up your event? To take things down afterwards?

Venue checklist

- What potential venues are there in your area?
- What are the hire charges for these venues?
- What facilities are available?
- What permits will you require?
- What is the situation regarding parking and access?
- What signage will you need?
- What security will you need?
- What toilet facilities and amenities are required?
- What first aid facilities are available?
- What are the site maintenance requirements?
- What major equipment is required?
- What access will you have to the site before and after the event?



Fundraising and sponsorship

Money, and the cost of your event, will be a major consideration. How much money do you need? How much money do you have? Is there a shortfall?

If you need additional funds, there are a number of things you can do:

- approach local businesses
- approach local government
- approach state or federal arts funding authorities
- approach philanthropic trusts

You can seek cash contributions or donations or in-kind support.

Applying for grants

Grants from local councils, state or federal government organisations or philanthropic trusts usually require fairly detailed applications, and often the lead time is quite long – usually more than six months. However, you should contact your Museum Development Officer (MDO) or the Training & Professional Development Program (MAQ/RGAQ) to find out more about grant funding which may be available. When applying for grants you should read the funding application very carefully and contact the organisation for information if you have any questions or are uncertain about any questions or requirements. Your MDO may be able to assist you with the application.

Preparing a sponsorship proposal

Sponsorship can provide you with the support you need, but it is important to understand the difference between sponsorship and philanthropy. While philanthropic organisations provide money to an organisation without expecting a benefit in return, sponsors are giving you money or in-kind support in return for something.

You can approach sponsors with a request for cash, but you can also approach them for in-kind assistance. The local newspaper may be prepared to provide free advertising, the local supermarket may provide food, or plastic plates and cups, a winery might provide wine for the official opening, the local photo shop may agree to take photos, or develop yours, or even run a photo competition with prizes for the best photo taken at the event.

The local printer might help with printing programs or stationery. You could approach a local accounting or tax firm to provide assistance with your financial work (help prepare budgets, provide audited statements at the end of the event). The local real estate agent could produce and

set up display boards promoting your event. Just think of all the things you need to do, purchase, hire, etc. and consider who might already have such equipment, or the skills you need.

Most businesses say the main reason they don't respond to sponsorship queries is that the organisation seeking help doesn't consider the sponsor's needs as well. Simply writing a letter that says "we are having an exhibition and we need any support you can give us" is hardly an adequate request – it is preferable to suggest two or three sponsorship options (from really major support to minor support) and include both cash and in-kind alternatives.

A sponsorship proposal would include:

- A description of the event – when, where and why it is being held
- A description of the expected audiences
- Background on the organisation coordinating the event and its reputation
- Some indication of your experience with previous events or confirming your ability to successfully put on the event
- Information on the way you will promote your event
- Details of any sponsorships which have been obtained
- Estimated numbers of visitors/attendances
- A clear list of the benefits the sponsor will get (see below)
- An indication of the level of support (amount of money, in-kind, etc.) you are seeking
- How you will evaluate the event and measure its success

Some of the benefits you could offer to sponsors include:

- Naming rights to the event
- Signage at or around the venue (they pay for producing signs, banners, etc.)
- Preferred ticket or admission packages (free tickets, discounts, etc.)
- Private hospitality packages for sponsors or their guests (for example, a private night viewing just for sponsors and guests, or a special sponsor's tent at a festival)
- Distribution of a sponsor's literature or information with programs, tickets, media releases, etc.
- Logos on programs, media releases, etc.

- Editorial mention in publications (such as annual reports, newsletters)
- Special previews for sponsors and guests
- Acknowledgement at the opening, launch, or closing
- Exhibition or display space at the venue or exhibition
- Exclusive sales rights at the function (for food suppliers, etc.)
- Invitation to sponsors and their guests to social activities related to the event (opening, closing events, opportunity to meet VIPs)

Approaching potential sponsors

Once you write your sponsorship proposal you'll have to present it. Many people find this part of fundraising the least pleasant element. However, you are not just asking for money, you are offering benefits. You aren't begging for support, you're actually presenting a business proposal.

It helps to do your homework – in a smaller community you may already know which businesses are likely to sponsor activities, and which have a reputation for being less supportive. It's human nature to approach the "easy" opportunities first, but you can still contact the others if your event is a good one and there is some type of business "match". Even though the local wool and craft store doesn't have a reputation for supporting local sports clubs or the tourism association, they may be prepared to supply materials for a children's poster competition for your exhibition.

In a small community where you know everyone involved, the best approach may be to simply call in, explain what you're doing, discuss the project and hand over the proposal. You may get a decision on the spot, or the business may want some time to consider. Follow up at an appropriate time, and thank them for their consideration, even if they can't help this time.

In a larger community, or when dealing with someone you don't know, a good approach is to make a telephone call, introduce yourself and your organisation, give a brief rundown on the planned event and say you'd like to send them a sponsorship proposal. Then you can post the proposal and follow up with a phone call a few days later.

Perhaps the most useful sponsor to "get on board" as early as possible is the media. Often if local businesses know the media is supportive they will be more prepared to help, since they know you'll probably get more publicity and exposure for your event – and that could also mean bigger attendances.

If your proposal is turned down, don't take it personally. In these days when organisations are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, businesses – even small businesses – are constantly being approached for sponsorships.

Some businesses set aside a specific amount of money, and when it's gone – that's it. Others may pick one or two organisations and give them their full support. Others may not have a set budget, but look at the requests as they come in and then make decisions. They receive requests from kindergartens, schools and youth clubs, sporting clubs, service clubs, hospitals and hostels, welfare groups, arts organisations and charities. There is rarely enough money to go around, so businesses have to make tough decisions.

A good, well thought out proposal, which covers all the points listed above, stands a better chance of being considered and accepted.

Meeting sponsors' expectations

Once an organisation or individual has agreed to be a sponsor, you have an obligation to look after them, ensure you deliver on your promises and – most importantly – to supply them with detailed information and a thank-you after the event.

After the event you should prepare a brief report on the event, containing information on the relevant facts and figures – numbers attending, amount of media coverage received, public response (quoting the positive comments

from the visitor book, or other positive feedback you've received). Include photos of the event (especially the ones you have taken which show the sponsor's name, banner, show them at the launch events, display stand, etc.) Also include copies of the main brochure or leaflet and, of course, anything which included their name.

Thank them for their support and highlight the ways in which the community, your organisation and they – as sponsors – have benefited from the event.

For example...

We are pleased that this event, with your help, has increased young people's awareness of the challenges and hardships experienced by early settlers in our region. The response to the exhibition, especially to the photographs of the bark hut homesteads, was especially strong. The educational materials you sponsored were distributed to more than 300 schoolchildren in the district.

I am enclosing a copy of the education sheet for your files.

Sponsorship checklist

List the organisations you can approach for sponsorship and the type of sponsorship you will seek and the benefits you will offer.

Example...

Organisation	Type of sponsorship	Benefits
E&J Printing	printing of programs and award certificates	company logo on brochures, invitation to opening night party, special certificate of appreciation

8 Risk Management

We all hope that no disasters ever occur at your museum or gallery, or at your special event, but disasters do happen – vandalism, accidents, floods, hailstorms, burst water pipes, electrical fires, blocked drains, food poisoning, blackouts, robberies. Although the odds may be against any of these things happening, and the event will go smoothly on the day, risk management is not just about handling a disaster, it's about making sure you've considered the possibility – no matter how remote.

Before the big event, it will be worthwhile to talk with your local fire brigade, emergency services and/or local police. They can visit your site and identify potential hazards and problems and help set your mind at ease that you have plans in place should something happen. Having St. John Ambulance volunteers at the event on the day, and a police or fire brigade presence may be very helpful. It will also be useful to have a list of emergency telephone numbers and contact names available on the day.

Ask your local fire brigade to advise you on requirements and risks in terms of:

- building or site layout
- storage of hazardous materials
- the need for, and placement of fire extinguishers
- the appropriate type, placement and number of exits
- appropriate emergency equipment (fire blankets, etc.)
- evacuation procedures (including the safe movement of people away from danger)

Advise police when your building will be open outside of normal hours, so they can be aware of unusual movements. Will you need extra security because of especially valuable items on display? If so, you may want to have extra volunteers around, or even ask the local police officer to put in an appearance.

If your event is an outdoor community celebration planned for the evening, will you need security on the off-chance that some visitors may have too much to drink or behave badly? Again, just having a few extra volunteers around, perhaps from the local service clubs, will probably be enough to keep things under control. Will you be hosting an invitation-only event and need volunteers to check invitations and monitor the entry? If you are selling merchandise you may need an extra volunteer or two to keep an eye on things, and make certain the cash-box is always accounted for, and to help when people have queries or want to make credit card purchases. Will you be moving from one venue to

another? If so, then you may need extra people to help direct motor or pedestrian traffic and make sure there are no problems as people and vehicles move in the same spaces.

Legal issues and concerns

You may also require legal advice about the legal status of the Committee. If you are planning a special exhibition in your museum or gallery, then this may not be necessary, but if you are planning a festival, pageant or outside event (such as a re-enactment) you will want to be sure that you know what your responsibilities and liabilities are.

You could be sued if someone is injured, and everyone needs to know their legal position if, for example, the event loses money, or if borrowed valuables or hired equipment is lost or destroyed. You will need to protect yourselves and your committee – probably through becoming an incorporated body or by working through an auspicing body.

If the event committee do not wish to, or do not have the time to, become incorporated they could find a legally constituted non-profit organisation (such as the museum, gallery or historical society itself) to act as an auspicing body for the event. The auspicing body will put their name to the event and take responsibility for the financial and legal dealing of the event. However, it is important to remember this is, indeed, a big responsibility, and the auspicing organisation will need to keep a close eye on the event or activity to make sure it is running well.

There are other legal issues which also need to be addressed. These relate to "Intellectual Property" and copyright. If an artistic work (painting, musical piece, play, dance, book) has been especially commissioned for your event then you will need to be clear about who has Intellectual Property Rights to the work – the original creator or the organisation which has commissioned and paid for the work. As well, if you are reproducing other people's photographs or images, permission must be received and if you are performing songs or hiring musical groups to perform you may have to pay a royalty fee. You may also need permission from copyright owners of plays and musicals. The Australian Copyright Centre can assist you in finding out what your obligations are under these rules and regulations.

It would be wise to talk with your organisation's solicitor, or perhaps contact your local council, if you have any questions about legal issues or insurance matters.

Insurance

You will, of course, already have appropriate insurance coverage for your museum or gallery. Litigation is becoming increasingly common and public liability insurance is absolutely essential.

When staging an event or off-site activity, or bringing in a valuable travelling exhibition, you will need to ensure you have the required additional insurance.

You will need insurance to cover the organisers, audiences, artists and technicians, performers, and additional coverage for theft, damage, etc. to travelling exhibitions.

You may need to consider Public Liability and Product Liability (public liability covers you in case someone is injured, and product liability covers you if, for example, someone gets food poisoning at your cocktail party or BBQ). You may also need to cover volunteer workers and property (including money) which you own or are responsible for. If you are holding an outdoor event you may want to consider insurance against inclement weather. It will be important to talk with your insurance broker.

Remember that you need to check and organise insurance well in advance (weeks or months) – don't wait until one or two days before your special activity. Get professional advice and make sure you provide full information on your event, including a full list of activities. If you are using outside contractors for entertainment, games or rides, food or beverages, make sure you check that they, too, have insurance coverage.

Check with an insurance agent or solicitor before signing any agreements that transfer any liability from another organisation to your own, and record full details of any incident which involves injury, property damage or complaints about illness, injury, etc. Remember, a claimant has up to six years to make a claim, and in the case of children this period can extend even further, so it is important to ensure you have been thorough and careful in handling insurance at the time of the event.

Risk management checklist

Before the event, talk to:

- local fire brigade
- emergency services
- local police
- private security firm (if required)
- St. John Ambulance
- service clubs (if providing assistance)
- insurance broker
- legal advisor (legal status of event, copyright, etc.)
- local council (health department, road traffic, bylaws)

At the event:

- have a list of emergency telephone numbers
- ensure staff/volunteers are briefed on whom to contact in an emergency
- have accident report or incident report forms available



9 *Identifying potential partnerships*

Working with others is a very good way to extend your resources, and also potentially attract new audiences. When you have formulated the basic concept for your event it may be useful to talk to some other community organisations and see if there are any ways you can work together.

If other community groups are planning Centenary of Federation activities you can “compare notes” to ensure your events complement, not duplicate, one another. It may also be possible to share equipment or materials (they have trestle tables which you could use; you have display cases which they could use).

There might be a possibility of combining with some of them or linking them so that you have a joint program, or a weekend of celebrations (for example, your event on Saturday and their event on Sunday with joint ticketing or joint promotions).

You can also print joint brochures or advertisements featuring all the Centenary events planned for your community or region. You can certainly agree to joint exchanges — distributing information on their events at your museum and gallery in exchange for the opportunity to distribute your information at their venue or events.

Discuss your event with your local tourism association to see if it can be promoted through visitor information centres or if local tourism operators may be prepared to “package” your event, or a series of events. For example, a motel operator may be prepared to offer packages including accommodation, breakfast and admission to your event at a special price for tourists. The local restaurants and cafes, motels, hotels, caravan parks and bed & breakfasts and petrol stations may be prepared to give brochures to their customers.

Cooperative opportunities checklists

Some organisations and community groups you can start to talk with include:

- other museums and galleries
- public library
- local government authority
- service clubs
- RSL
- agricultural society
- local hospital auxiliary
- women’s associations
- sporting groups and clubs
- tourist attractions
- senior citizen’s clubs
- car clubs
- environmental groups
- ethnic community groups and clubs
- local tourism association
- retailers’ association, progress association or traders’ association
- churches, religious groups
- arts and crafts groups
- garden clubs
- historical society
- music groups
- schools
- youth clubs
- national and state parks authorities

Cooperative activities to consider:

- combined events
- joint advertising
- joint promotion
- linking events in terms of time, location
- sharing equipment
- brochure exchanges



10 *Launches, openings, closings*

Launches, first nights and openings provide an opportunity to generate publicity, arouse public interest and awareness of a new exhibition, and provide a “special occasion” for those who have worked to create the exhibition, festival or event. Launches and opening events are also a good time to thank supporters and sponsors, and to whet the public’s appetite for the main event.

A special event, preview, launch, first night, opening or closing ceremony can be an important occasion, but it is almost never one that happens easily or without any last minute crisis. In fact, you are really preparing an event within an event.

Although almost every group has organised – or will need to organise – some type of opening function, there is no single “right” way to do such events.

To some extent it really depends on how creative and imaginative you are. Despite the need for originality, however, there are basic elements for any launch. There is usually a ceremony of some sort, a few (hopefully short!) speeches, and a few words of recognition for those who have been involved with creating the new exhibition, event or festival. There are refreshments (of course!) and there should be some opportunities for the media to take some interesting photos.

Launches and openings – planning the event

Really, planning a special component function, such as a launch or opening, is a mini-project within your main project. The same requirements apply: you are planning a short-term event, you need to be clear about your objectives, you need a vision of what will happen, you need to assess the feasibility of the idea in terms of time, space and budgets, you need to plan the actual implementation carefully with a qualified team, and you need to stick to your budget and timetable. Your opening should be memorable, but should not consume so much of your time that you lose focus on the main event.

Preliminary planning

There is a checklist at the end of this section to help you plan your event. Many of the items there are self-explanatory, but here are some additional details for the ones that warrant a bit of explanation.

- Prepare budget and basic structure of opening (highlight, speakers, date and time of day, etc.).

If you want to have an opening event which gets media attention and also recognises the contribution

of volunteers and sponsors, you may decide to have a fairly formal occasion with some unique or special activity (for example, ethnic dancing or a ceremonial ribbon-cutting).

Children’s activities are probably best launched during the day – with plenty of children in attendance at the launch. Museum and gallery exhibitions are generally launched in late afternoon or evening, performing arts programs are usually launched in the evening, etc. But picking an unusual time (a breakfast launch, for example) can have appeal.

If you particularly want – or need – a politician or other VIP to open your event, either set the date and see who is available, or contact the office of the person you particularly want to have attend and check on their availability for a couple of dates. If you set a firm date, you may have to adjust your VIP invitation list accordingly.

- Confirm date with key participants (local government officials, VIPs, Board and committee members).

Once you’ve set your date and locked in your “star” notify everyone else involved with the project (including sponsors) so they can write the date in their diaries.

- Write up guest list, design and send out invitations, organise gifts and visitors book.

Prepare a guest list of local VIPs, government representatives, members of your Board or committee and the volunteers who worked on the project. In regional and rural communities there can be real problems if some individuals feel they have been ignored or overlooked.

It is probably better to invite more people than fewer and avoid hurt feelings. Also decide whether the invitation will be addressed to one person, or also permit them to bring a guest.

Send invitations out between six weeks and three weeks in advance, depending on the usual protocols in your community. And don’t forget, even though you put an RSVP on the invitation, don’t be surprised if a lot (even the majority!) of people don’t actually respond by the due date, but plan to turn up anyway!

- Prepare speeches, awards, etc. as required and prepare a running sheet.

A running sheet is a schedule or timetable for the event. It is really important to put it in writing and make sure people involved in the event all have a

copy and know what will happen and when.

- Organise catering, menus, seating arrangements, entertainment and equipment.

If you are having any entertainment you will need to check on their equipment requirements (stage, lighting, microphone, speakers), fees, confirm bookings, the program, the time they will arrive, how long they will perform, etc. Find out what they need (a dressing room or place to change clothes, microphones, special lighting, assistance carrying large or heavy items into the venue, etc.). And make certain you actually do provide what they need. If they arrive and do not have the equipment they need, your event will suffer.

Arrange for any other equipment you need for the event. That might include a PA system, lectern, slide projector, overhead projector, computer connections, and any other aids which are required. Even if you plan a short event, and assume people will stand, provide some seating for older and disabled guests.

Similarly, organise the menu with the caterers and determine what equipment is required (ovens, urns, cutlery and crockery, glasses, serving platters, tables and chairs, linen, etc.).

- Coordinate arrangements with others as required (photographers, etc.).

If you have agreed to let sponsors put up a display or hand out advertising material, ensure you have made the necessary arrangements. If you have decided to hang banners or put up flags make sure you plan in advance that everything is in order (the right equipment — ladders, picture wire, etc.).

- Arrange for appropriate staff/volunteers to be assigned to VIPs.

It is good manners to ensure invited guests are greeted and looked after. Visitors and VIPs may not know local people and may appreciate someone to introduce them to others and make them feel welcome.

- Organise to take photos to record the event.

This is so important, but often overlooked. Even if it is just one of your volunteers with a simple, basic camera, you need to record your event. You'll really be sorry later if you don't have a record. Organise photos or a video.

The list of things to do the day before focuses on the need to check and confirm all your earlier planning and make sure everything is under control. Reconfirm arrangements, recheck with the media, review the program, make sure the printing, gifts, name tags, etc. are all ready. And check the weather report. Will you need

somewhere for people to leave wet umbrellas and raincoats?

On the day of the launch or opening, test the equipment *beforehand* to make sure everything works, check that name tags are laid out and ready, the food and beverages are ready, the volunteers, "greeters" and speakers are present, the photographer is in place, the running sheets are in the right hands and the guests have arrived. Then smile! — and try to have a good time yourself.

After the launch be certain to thank everyone who helped out or participated. Tidy up, and ensure any equipment which was borrowed is returned clean and in good order. Pay bills promptly (catering, equipment hire, printing, etc.). Follow up with the media and thank them for any coverage received. Collect media articles, develop photos and put together a record of the event. Include a copy of the invitation, the program, media releases, photos, and any other information you receive (letters from guests, etc.) It will be a good record, and help you with future event planning. You don't have to prepare a fancy album, just collect everything in a folder or envelope.

Launch/Opening/Closing checklist

- Review costs for function (catering, invitations, entertainment)
- Design basic structure of opening (speakers, time of day, etc.)
- Confirm date and key participants
- Design and send out invitations, organise gifts and visitors' book
- Prepare invitation list
- Prepare certificates, awards, etc.
- Schedule/running sheet prepared
- Make arrangements for entertainment and equipment
- Consider alternate bad-weather arrangements if required
- Print menus, programs, placecards, etc. Plan seating arrangements as required
- Coordinate arrangements with others as required
- Arrange for appropriate staff/volunteers to be assigned to VIPs
- Prepare background resume of guest speaker and program notes, timetable, forward to those introducing and thanking speaker and everyone involved in coordinating activity
- Make arrangements for photography, video, film of the event

- Advise security of any special requirements and arrangements, prepare signage as required
- Go over media invitation list
- Plan photo opportunities

The day before

- Confirm arrangements with entertainers, etc.
- Re-confirm accommodation arrangements and special requirements
- Confirm event with media
- Review program running-sheets with MC and staff
- Ensure media kits are assembled and ready
- Check weather forecast, if necessary
- Confirm staff arrangements for looking after guests and VIPs
- Ensure gifts, etc. are wrapped, labelled and ready
- Ensure placecards are printed and table arrangements completed
- Check name tags, arrangements for reception desk, etc.
- Check on visitors book, if required
- Confirm photographer (requirements, time, etc.)
- Confirm security arrangements, staffing, briefing

On the day

- Check all PA systems, projector, internet links, any other aids which may be required
- Check location/placement of menus, programs, placecards, etc. media kits, etc.
- Confirm VIP hosts
- Set up registration desk, reception desk, name tags, etc.
- Confirm arrival of photographer
- Confirm arrival of catering
- Check with security to ensure everything is organised
- Put out visitors book and pen, if required
- Put up direction and information signs as required
- Ensure arrival of guests, other staff, board
- Greet VIPs and media

After the event

- Thank everyone who helped out or participated
- Tidy up
- Return any borrowed equipment (clean and in good order)
- Pay bills (catering, entertainment, equipment hire, printing, etc.)
- Follow up with the media
- Make a record of the event. Collect articles, photos, invitations, programs, media releases, etc.



11 *Event close-down, follow up and evaluation*

Sometimes the end of an event can be a “flat” period for staff and volunteers. After all, the event which has brought them together is over, the visitors have departed, and all that’s left is a mess to clean up, boxes to pack and paperwork to do. Indeed, if all goes well, in a few days there will be no physical evidence that the event ever took place!

Good planners include some type of closing event to thank everyone, remind them of the good times, and perhaps invite them to do it all again next year.

The final stages of an event consist of four elements:

- The **physical shutdown** – taking down the exhibition and putting items away, and cleaning and tidying the site
- The **financial and legal shutdown** – paying all the bills, doing the final financial reports, the audit (if required), signing off contracts (if required), submitting final reports to sponsors, funding authorities, etc.
- The **final review and assessment** – a meeting with the relevant people involved, especially volunteers, to review the event, what worked and what didn’t and evaluate the overall success
- The **human resources wind-up** – paying any paid staff and completing required paperwork, thanking volunteers, writing letters to sponsors, running thank-you functions for volunteers and/or sponsors, final reports, organising an ongoing committee if there are to be future events

Financial and personnel issues

The two critical areas are the financial and personnel areas.

If a company or other legal entity was formed to handle the management of the event, it will be necessary to disband it (unless the event will be ongoing and repeated annually). All the bills have to be located and paid, and any assets acquired (display cases, stationery and office furniture, banners, lights, etc.) need to be either returned to their rightful owners or disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Make sure that the process is clear and fair. Often a successful event runs into problems at the end when some individuals feel there has been unfair distribution of even small items such as T-shirts and souvenir merchandise, stationery, pens and pencils and office equipment. Regardless of whether things are sold, given away, returned to suppliers, distributed to volunteers, or

thrown away, it should be understood and approved of by those involved.

If anyone has been paid – staff, performers and casual workers (security, cleaning, parking attendants, ticket collectors, etc.) – you need to ensure all appropriate paperwork is completed with regard to taxes, superannuation and leave entitlements.

Volunteers, too, need to be acknowledged. Knowing who volunteered, what they did, and how well they worked is important for future events. Some volunteers become involved because they need work experience or want to be able to develop new skills. Formal recognition of these achievements can be very important to them.

You may consider some type of function to thank staff and volunteers, or present certificates, awards or other mementos. If you had a large volunteer staff, then an official thankyou and recognition of some type is absolutely essential.

Evaluating the success of the event

Debriefing staff and volunteers, and getting their opinion about the event, and its strengths and weaknesses, is also important. The opinions and comments of these people are invaluable. These are often the people who were at the “front-line” of the event, dealing directly with visitors. They heard the complaints, the praise, the criticism, and they saw what worked and what didn’t, and may have some very useful observations to make.

- Did the project achieve its purpose?
- Was the financial performance in line with expectations?
- What was the level of user satisfaction?
- What lessons are to be learned?

Event closedown checklist:

- Have you completed the physical shutdown?
- Have you completed all financial requirements?
- Have you completed all legal requirements?
- Have you thanked volunteers and staff?
- Have you made a record of the event (including advertising and publicity, photographs, etc.)?
- Did the project achieve its purpose?
- Was the financial performance in line with expectations?
- What was the level of visitor satisfaction?
- What lessons are to be learned?

12 *Event Checklists*

The following detailed checklists will help you to ensure you've covered all key elements of organising your event.

Advance planning

- Design event - including key elements and activities
- Identify audiences - and define benefits for each target market
- Set up organising committee (if required)
- Confirm dates and key participants
- Set budgets
- Organise and book venue (as required)
- Prepare list of venue requirements
- Prepare detailed program or schedule for event
- Make arrangements for entertainment and equipment
- Consider alternate bad-weather arrangements if required
- Coordinate arrangements with others as required
- Prepare sponsorship proposals and organise sponsorship
- Prepare VIP and special guest lists (for launches, closing, etc.)
- Prepare any certificates, awards, etc.
- Arrange for appropriate staff/volunteers to be recruited and assigned responsibilities
- Make arrangements for photography, video, film of the event
- Review risk management issues - security, insurance, legal issues, etc.
- Organise signage as required
- Organise marketing, advertising, publicity and promotions
- Plan photo opportunities

Before the opening

- Confirm arrangements with entertainers, etc.
- Re-confirm accommodation arrangements and special requirements (if required)
- Confirm event with media
- Review program running-sheets with volunteers and staff
- Ensure media kits are assembled and ready
- Check weather forecast, if necessary
- Confirm staff arrangements for looking after guests and VIPs
- Check on visitors' book, if required
- Confirm photographer (requirements, time, etc.)
- Confirm security arrangements, staffing, briefing
- Confirm details for launch/opening (see below)

Launch/opening night (closing activities)

- Plan separate budget, activities
- Design and send out invitations, organise gifts and visitors' book
- Print menus, programs, placecards, etc.
- Plan seating arrangements, as required
- Prepare background resume of guest speaker and program notes, timetable, and forward to those introducing and thanking speaker and everyone involved in coordinating activity
- Go over media invitation list
- Make arrangements for venue, entertainment and equipment
- Ensure gifts, etc. are wrapped, labelled and ready
- Ensure placecards and table arrangements are completed and printed
- Check name tags, arrangements for reception desk, etc.
- Check location/placement of menus, programs, placecards, media kits, etc.
- Confirm VIPs and assign volunteer hosts

On the opening day (launch/closing)

- Check all PA systems, projector, internet links, and any other aids which may be required
- Set up registration desk, reception desk, name tags, etc.
- Confirm arrival of photographer
- Check with security to ensure everything is organised
- Put out visitors' book and pen, if required
- Put up direction and information signs as required
- Ensure arrival of guests, other staff, Board
- Greet VIPs and media

After the event

- Take down exhibits, clean and tidy up
- Return any borrowed equipment (clean and in good order)
- Pay bills (catering, entertainment, equipment hire, printing, etc.)
- Finalise staff and volunteer arrangements
- Follow up with the media
- Make a record of the event (collect articles, photos, invitations, programs, media releases, etc.)
- Thank everyone who helped out or participated
- Organise closing event (if required)



Developing your marketing, publicity and public relations programs

One of the most important tasks in preparing for your event/activity/exhibition will be the development of a marketing and public relations program. Creating a stunning exhibition with a really important message will create a strong sense of achievement within your team, but they'll be very disappointed if no-one comes to see it. A re-enactment, for example, would be extremely disappointing with no audience or few participants.

Why do we need to do marketing and promotions?

Marketing is an important aspect of museum and gallery operations. Marketing brings the museum and its visitors together. If we didn't do marketing and promotions, museums and galleries might not do much more than preserve their collections. And while preserving the collection is very, very important, most museums want to do more than that.

They hope to use their collections to inform and educate the public, to communicate a message about their town and their region, its past, present and future, to build a sense of community and to improve understanding between groups. All of this requires interaction with the public — whether it's local residents or school groups, senior citizens clubs, holidaying family groups, coach groups or international tourists.

Marketing plays a major role in creating the opportunity for communication. Bringing in visitors is important in meeting the mission or vision of most museums, galleries and historical societies, and for meeting the objectives of holding a special event or exhibition, but it also has very practical outcomes.

Whether we like to admit it or not, visitor numbers are a major way in which our success or viability is judged. Local councils, funding authorities, local residents and sponsors all look at visitor numbers as a vital element in judging the impact of your special event on its community. So it is important — critical — to get the message out, and to attract people to "come and see" or participate.

Selecting your marketing and promotions options

You'll need to devote some time, and effort, to planning a marketing and publicity program which will generate interest and enthusiasm. The tools at your disposal include:

- media releases and publicity
- public relations, promotions
- cooperative marketing
- direct marketing
- advertising
- merchandising

Promoting a temporary exhibition, festival or special event is not really very difficult since it already has some inherent "news value". It is new and different, it won't be around very long, it is something which might interest the local community.

But there are some things which have to be done slightly differently in promotional terms. We generally refer to it as the "drip, drip, drip" approach to promotion — providing a slow but steady stream of publicity and advertising which leads up to the event itself.

Remember the most important thing is to plan — and give yourself plenty of time to prepare your promotions.

Practical advice for planning your activities

Before embarking on a marketing, publicity and public relations program ask yourself some serious questions:

- **How much publicity is realistic?** If your event is a small photographic exhibition based on the history of your local primary school it will interest local residents, but probably not bring tourists from great distances. And while your local newspaper would be certain to give it publicity, it is unlikely the major network television stations will come up from Brisbane to cover the story (Unless, perhaps, someone very famous went to your school and you have wonderful pictures of him/her!)
- **How much can you handle?** You will have plenty of other work to do ensuring the success of your event or activity. How much effort can your group afford to put into marketing and publicity? Think in terms of three key issues:
 - Human resources
 - Time
 - Budget

Human resources

Be realistic about the skills your organisation has – is there someone who is good with words and can use a computer or type media releases? Can someone send email media releases to the local and regional media? Is there someone who is good at public speaking? Do most of your board and volunteers dread the thought of speaking to a reporter? Don't set up an ambitious program that no one feels comfortable actually doing.

Time

Be realistic about the time you can spend on PR/media – are your volunteers so pressed for time and so busy with the exhibition or event itself they don't have time to spend on the telephone or writing media releases, arranging interviews, or planning media events? If so, then you really need to focus your activities on things that will work effectively with a minimum of effort. Organising interviews, and waiting for photographers or television crews to complete their work can be very time-consuming, and someone really needs to be with them to make sure they have what they need. Publicity can be cheap in money terms – but very expensive in terms of time. It can take hours to film a news or feature segment that ends up as only two or three minutes of on-air time; this can really test your patience and good humour.

Budget

You should be aware of the "hidden" costs of publicity (telephone, fax, printing and email costs, and staff time before, during and after the event). And, of course there are all the "overt" costs of publicity, which could include setting up special media previews, catering for media and support crews (camera, lighting and sound equipment operators), printing and making up media kits, hiring special camera or video equipment hire.

As with virtually every other aspect of your event, you probably won't have enough time or money to do everything you'd like, so you'll have to make choices about what you can afford in terms of both time and money.

Media, communications and publicity

As soon as your committee has finalised the major details of the event or exhibition – the theme, the dates, anything special or unique planned – it is time to contact the media and send out information.

Begin with a brief story about the aims and objectives of the event, the participants, the venue, and the fact that it is directly related to the Centenary of Federation theme. You may be able to tie it in with other Centenary activities which will be taking place. This will be your first media release.

Media releases

We usually communicate with the media through media releases. These are written stories about our event. There is a "formula" for preparing a media release which will assist you – and which will help ensure it gets into print!

Presentation

Media releases are always typed (on typewriter or computer) on one side of A4 paper. If possible, use letterhead from your museum or gallery. There should be a generous margin (at least 2.5 cm top and bottom and on both sides). Use a readable size print (usually 12 point Arial or Times New Roman – most standard typewriters use a form of Times New Roman print). Generally speaking, the media release should only be one page.

Written information

Use short sentences and short paragraphs (one or two sentences). There are six critical pieces of information which must be supplied in a media release – preferably in the first 2 to 3 sentences.

Journalists call them the 5 Ws:

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY

In the first paragraph of the media release explain –

WHO is involved: the name of the museum or gallery.

WHAT are you doing: a special exhibition, a travelling exhibition, a festival, a re-enactment, the opening of new premises, etc.

WHEN is it happening: what are the date(s)?

WHERE is it happening: at the museum or gallery, at the local library or shire offices, or in the main street?

WHY is it happening: as part of Centenary of Federation, to highlight the role of service personnel in your community, to showcase the development of your region, to highlight the contribution of migrants to your town.

The first paragraph should also create some sense of interest or excitement in the project.

Media releases (cont'd)

Compare this:

The Balliang Historical Society will host a temporary exhibition of photos of agricultural activities in the district over the past one hundred years at its premises in Main Street from June 1 – 30th. This is part of our Centenary of Federation activities. The exhibition is titled "Living and Working on the Land". The photos feature farming equipment from the 1880s – 1930s including traction engines, tractors, ploughs and teams of horses. Some are from the Scott family collection. The photos show farm life in the district.

With this:

Balliang's close links with the land will be the focus of a special exhibition of rarely seen historic photographs. The exhibition, part of the town's Centenary of Federation activities, includes photos from the district's oldest properties, including the Scott family. Called "Living and Working on the Land", the collection, at the Balliang Historical Society, from 1-30th June, shows the changes in farming in the district, including one photo of 1890's chaff cutting with steam traction engines, and one from the 1930s of a giant Clydesdale pulling a tractor out of a muddy creek bed.

"We still have that Fergie", said Bill Scott, 73. "I can remember the day that photo was taken and Dad had to take old Robbie down the back paddock to pull Uncle Charlie out — the grey Fergie was stuck fast and Dad took the photo before putting Robbie to work".

Get the key information into the first paragraph of the media release, then expand on it. Editors don't always have time to rewrite so they cut — you don't want essential facts to be lost because they came at the end of the one page story and were cut because of lack of space.

Try to include quotes from people involved in the activity ("real words" make a story more interesting). Proofread your story carefully and be meticulous in spelling names, titles, etc.

Targeting the right media

Decide who to include in your media program. Your local community newspaper is very important, and so, too, are local and regional radio and television stations.

You should contact the news editors, of course, but don't forget other departments — country living, home and fashion, arts, education, sports. Look through the newspapers and magazines you are interested in and locate the names of feature writers who might be interested in your story. Check with your local newspaper or local library to see if they have a copy of Margaret Gee's *Media Guide*. This very useful publication lists very detailed information on media of all types throughout Australia with names and contact information.

If you hope to attract visitors from the wider regional area, it may also be worthwhile sending media releases to the major regional and metropolitan newspapers and broadcast media that cover your whole area.

Timing is everything

If your event runs for several days or weeks, make sure you have a constant flow of stories throughout. If it is a one-day event, of course, you'll focus your publicity on pre-event promotions and publicity on the day. However, if you can only get media coverage after the event, make sure you save photos, videos of television coverage and tapes of radio promotions to use for future publicity activities.

The media as a sponsor

In addition to media releases, you can talk to the media about other promotional opportunities including free community service announcements, listings on community bulletin boards or the community news section of the newspaper, additional photo opportunities, or listings in the "What's On" section of the paper.

You can approach the media about potential sponsorship. They may be prepared to assist you by helping design your advertisements, they may be prepared to run the ad free or at a discounted rate (run the ad twice instead of once, or run a bigger ad than you paid for). You could also suggest you work with them on special promotions or competitions (with tickets to the event or exhibition, or small prizes such as an exhibition catalogue or souvenir merchandise) in return for free publicity.

Media kits

When you send out the first media release about your upcoming activity or event, or when you invite the media to visit to take photos or interview key people for a special launch activity, you should provide them with a media kit. This is really very simple. If your museum or

gallery has printed folders with your logo, use them. Otherwise you can simply place all the information in an envelope. Include:

- a copy of your media release
- a fact sheet (one page information sheet which expands and explains the event in more detail — who, what, when, where, why and HOW — who is curating the exhibition, more details on the timetable for the festival, details about who will be involved in the re-enactment and where the costumes have come from, etc.)
- biographies of performers or special guests
- information about event sponsors (but not sponsor promotional material such as brochures, ads, etc.)
- a copy of your museum or gallery brochure and any other promotional material you have.
- If you are hosting a travelling exhibition, then include information from the organisers of the exhibition, with details on where it has been, attendance numbers, etc.

How to get the most out of your media and public relations activities

Doing your own media relations and publicity activity can be hard work, but it can also be very rewarding. Seeing good media coverage for your event will really make everyone involved feel positive and enthusiastic. Here are some tips for making the most of your media and public relations activities.

- Be meticulous about names and titles (especially the names of media people).
- Set up a scrapbook or photo album and organise it regularly.
- Keep the simple things — letters, programs, invitations, etc.
- If in doubt — save it (later on you can always have a clean out).
- Get a museum/gallery camera and have several people learn how to use it.
- Get comfortable with communications technology (fax, computer/email).
- Find good assistants who are polite and helpful.
- Make lists and check them regularly.
- For any event — analyse what is the worst thing that could happen to spoil the activity, and then decide how you would handle it. Thinking about problems in advance saves you stress and enables you to respond to real problems more calmly.

- Remember to thank the media when they give you coverage.
- The media will often arrive either early or late — but you have to be on time for all appointments.
- Journalists don't always remember all the facts, but they never forget rudeness, misinformation, etc.
- Remember that Murphy's Law (Anything that can go wrong — will go wrong!) is really about public relations!

When you don't want media coverage!

Most of the time we seek media coverage for our events. However, sometimes things go wrong — accidents occur, something is lost, stolen or damaged or something embarrassing happens. Media have a curious way of sniffing out bad news and suddenly, there they are — on your doorstep or on the telephone.

If your problem is a major one — a serious accident, a major fire, a significant theft — then you may want to consult others for assistance. Ensure that your Board or Committee of Management are immediately informed. If your organisation has a disaster plan, it may be necessary to implement it. It may also be necessary to contact a solicitor or your insurance agent. Contact your Museum Development Officer if the problem is directly related to your museum, artefacts, travelling exhibitions, etc. You may have to speak with the police, fire officers, etc. But what about the media?

This is going to be a difficult period, no doubt, but there are things you can do to ensure your working relationship with the media remains as positive and smooth as possible.

- **Don't 'disappear'** — you can't just refuse to answer the phone or open the door. That will make it worse. Be there. But don't say too much until you know the facts. It is perfectly acceptable to answer initial queries by saying that you are checking on the situation and will comment once you know exactly what is going on.
- **Ensure that only one person is dealing with the media.** Assign someone to be the contact point and refer all media to that person. The worst thing that can happen at this point is six different people making six different comments.
- **Don't lie** — often information about a problem has come from "inside", i.e. from a talkative volunteer or one of their family members. You will lose all credibility if you say "it didn't happen" when, of course, it did. It is better to say you will check, get the details and get back to them, than to deny anything is wrong.

- **Be reliable** — say you will call back and do so! But take the time to get the facts, consult others to find out what to do, and "catch your breath" before facing them again.
- **Don't respond to hypotheticals** — avoid the "what if...." questions. What if the missing painting has been stolen? What if the injured volunteer dies? Simply express concern about the current status and say you can't comment on things that haven't happened. "We are very concerned about the missing painting, but it is too early to comment on what may have happened". "We are very concerned about Mary's injuries, and have been in touch with her family. I'm on my way to the hospital and can't comment any more until I have more information".
- **Implement your Crisis Management Plan** — yes, of course, you must have one! If you don't yet, you may want to seek advice or help from professionals.

The good news is that while crisis planning is useful, most events do go smoothly, and we rarely need to implement any of these things — but it's important to know, just in case!

Public relations

Public relations refers to the way your organisation is perceived within the community. Are you seen as a "good community neighbour" that participates in community events, conducts activities of interest and relevance to a wide range of residents? The keys to good public relations are information and involvement. Keep relevant people informed, and try to get everyone involved.

There are various groups within the community you may need to consider:

- local government
- local authorities (fire, police, emergency services)
- funding authorities
- education facilities (kindergartens, primary, secondary, tertiary)
- local businesses
- local tourism groups and the visitor information centre
- sponsors and donors
- the media
- local community groups (service clubs, youth groups, arts cooperatives)
- your own staff and volunteers

The enthusiastic support of all these groups will certainly go a long way in increasing the success of your event. The most important thing is for them to know what is

happening. No-one likes to be the last to hear about something, especially in a relatively small community! In some cases it will be appropriate to keep these groups informed by sending them copies of media releases, but in other cases you may want to do more.

If you live in a small community it may be most effective to just visit each group personally to let them know what you're planning, and to seek their support or identify ways in which they can participate. A telephone call or a letter can also be effective, or you might put up information on community noticeboards or at the local library, youth centre or community centre.

Identify groups or individuals you particularly want to "target" such as arts cooperatives, schools, retail traders' groups and the visitor information centre and service clubs. Offer to speak at a Rotary Club meeting, put up notices at the senior citizens centre, or leave leaflets at the counter at the local government office's information counter.

It is particularly important to make sure your own volunteers feel they are part of this special event or activity. Keep them informed through meetings, your regular newsletter, and through one-on-one discussions.

Promotions

Promotions can be the "fun" part of publicity and advertising. What ideas can you come up with which will be innovative and interesting? They need not be costly, but if they are unusual, they will attract attention.

Competitions build interest in your event. They include fundraising raffles (don't forget you may need a permit!), colouring competitions, poster competitions (perhaps then displayed at the local shopping centre or library), photography competitions, naming competitions, guessing competitions of all kinds, competitions which ask entrants to predict the winner of an event, or vote for favourite performances, answering simple (or complicated) questions, etc. Prizes can be modest, or could involve an opportunity to do something others can't (meet the VIP guest, play a particular role in a re-enactment, attend the opening night launch party as a special guest, etc.).

Personality promotions are very exciting. If you have a well-known person attending your event, or if you have attracted prominent business leaders or politicians to the event, make the most of it. You will have to negotiate this with the VIP, but they may be prepared to visit schools, hospitals or attend social events or meet community leaders. The publicity generated will have a rub-off effect on your event, and can be valuable.

Photo opportunities are always interesting. An unveiling, the arrival of exhibition boxes, almost anything that involves children or animals. Really, almost anything you

can think of that is different could provide useful publicity.

Public speaking provides good opportunities to promote your event, and also seek support. Offer to speak at meetings which will attract your target audiences – traders' association, school groups, service clubs, sporting clubs, community groups, tourism groups, etc. Sell your event, and also provide them with ideas on how they can be a part of it. The more people who hear about your upcoming event, the more likely they are to either become involved or attend.

Having a launch, opening, first night, closing night or other activity can generate publicity and also heighten excitement for an event. It is also an opportunity to thank participants and volunteers, and give them an opportunity to enjoy the results of their labour. (See *Section 10 – launches, openings, closings* for more details.)

Advertising

Unlike publicity, promotions and public relations, advertising is a very precise form of sending out your message. You choose what you say, the words you will use, the size of your advertisement, photos or illustrations, and, of course, where, when and how often the advertisement will appear. However, all this control comes at a cost. Therefore, most museums and galleries use paid advertising sparingly and carefully.

You can contact newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations to request information on their advertising rates. Most smaller regional media will also provide assistance in putting together the ad (called "production"), as well. Be aware that there is some lead time in advertising. (Usually a week or two, but sometimes, especially for magazines, it can be much longer. Check the timelines when you request prices.)

The media do a lot of research on who their audiences are and will provide you with this information. If you want to reach older radio listeners, one station may be preferable to another. If you want to reach the youth market then another radio station might be more effective, or you could use the internet. Newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations can all give breakdowns of their audiences, and if the audience types vary during the day, week, etc. One thing to remember, however, is that local and community newspapers are especially effective in reaching large segments of your local community.

If you can persuade the media to become one of your sponsors it will be a considerable help, but they won't always be able to do things for free. If you are putting ads in the local newspaper, however, be sure to ask them if they can also provide some news coverage of your

event, to help support your advertising.

The key types of media you can consider are:

- Print – newspapers, magazines
- Broadcast – radio and television
- The internet – on line through the world wide web
- Display – billboards, displays, posters

Print advertising

Print advertising is useful to make sure everyone has the practical information they need about the festival or event. Although you may be able to get media coverage for a launch, people still need to know the “hard details” about the event itself – when it is on, where, how much it costs, what performers will be there, when they will be performing, how to get there, parking, etc.

Radio and television

Radio and television advertising can be expensive, but check with your local media about the requirements for community service announcements. Even if you have to pay for advertising time, you may be able to persuade them to produce the commercial for you as a sponsorship or contribution.

The internet

The Internet is becoming increasingly popular, especially with the tourism and arts sector. Galleries, museums, theatre groups, music groups and festivals all have websites these days. If your museum or gallery already has a website then you can add information about your special event to your site.

If you do not have a website then you can approach your local tourism association, community centre or local council for assistance. They may be willing to put information about your event on their own website, or link your site to theirs to increase your exposure. If you're not sure how to proceed, contact your local library or your local secondary school for assistance. It might even make an interesting assignment or project for Information Technology students.

Display advertising

Display advertising includes billboards, signs and posters. Your local real estate agent may be prepared to promote your event with a large sign (with their name printed at the bottom as one of your event sponsors).

Even with a limited budget you can prepare effective advertising campaigns.

Develop a similar “look and feel” to all your advertising so that each ad reinforces other ads. By using the same logo, same colours, same layout, same photos, you'll create a sense of recall with audiences. That way even limited advertising on radio or television, backed up with print advertising, can be very effective. One of the

biggest mistakes we make with advertising is to assume one big ad will be more effective than a lot of little ones. Small ads, repeated regularly in the build-up to an event, can have a strong impact.

Advertising isn't easy. It is best if you can get advice. Using an advertising agency is expensive (unless you can get one to sponsor your event). If there is someone on your Board or committee with advertising experience, or if any of your volunteers have skills in this area – by all means ask for their advice and assistance.

Printed materials – programs, brochures, posters, leaflets, handbills

Once you have finalised the event details (activities, dates, times, venues, performers, prices), you should prepare an event program or brochure.

If your budget allows, and it is appropriate for your activity, you might also consider leaflets, posters or handbills. Some of these can be sent to potential visitors via direct mail and they can also be distributed through tourist information centres, ticket sales outlets, arts venues, as an insert in local newspapers, at shops and retail outlets, at train or bus stations, at accommodation facilities, restaurants, cafes and takeaway outlets, and through schools, universities, libraries, local councils and other public facilities.

Just printing them isn't enough, however. You also need to work out how you will distribute them. The local newspaper may charge a fee to insert them in the paper. Volunteers can drop off programs at libraries and council offices and all the places listed above. Remember to save some for the media and for use during the festival or event itself.

Posters and handbills are an inexpensive and effective method of advertising special events or festivals. They can be widely distributed and if they are attractive in their own right, they can become souvenirs. You will need to check on by-laws for putting up posters and handbills, and make certain that after the event someone is responsible for removing them. You need to allow time to print them, and they should be up about two or three weeks before the event.

Street banners are a colourful and highly visible way to promote your event, but they can be quite expensive. You will need the approval, and probably the assistance, of local council to put them up.

Cooperative opportunities

It may be possible to work cooperatively with other organisations or businesses to promote your festival or event. By sharing costs and promoting several events or activities, you achieve two goals – increasing public

awareness and spreading your promotional dollar further. Check with the local tourism authority about the possibility of developing “packages” for your event (including accommodation, meals, and entry to the event). A good advertisement or brochure could be developed, with the costs shared between your own organisation and the other commercial operators.

Approach other tourist or cultural organisations to see if they would be prepared to print a combined brochure for activities taking place within your region. You could share costs and promote each other’s activities (for example, a 2001 *Summer Events in the Outback* brochure).

Direct marketing

Direct marketing refers to one-to-one promotions such as mail, telemarketing, and on-site promotions. For example, you can send copies of your event brochure or leaflet to everyone on your current mailing list, to local businesses, to government officials and local politicians, to your existing supporters and volunteers, members and friends groups. You could also send letters requesting support or sponsorship, or to invite other groups or individuals to participate in your event.

Sometimes it is useful to work with other organisations where there may be a good “match” — for example, if your event is an exhibition of sporting photos and memorabilia, you could send information to local sports groups and ask them to include it in the newsletter they send to their members.

Telemarketing uses the telephone to reach potential audiences. You might organise your volunteers to call other potential volunteers to explain the project. They might telephone potential sponsors, or call service clubs, offering to speak at upcoming meetings. While some organisations use telemarketing to sell tickets to events, it is unlikely you will have the time, resources or staff to undertake this type of activity.

On-site activity refers to the promotions you do at your museum or gallery. Putting up a display, with leaflets for visitors to take away with them, or offering everyone who visits your museum or gallery a brochure promoting the upcoming special event is a very effective form of direct marketing. You supply information directly to someone who has already shown some interest in what you are doing. Handing out brochures to people visiting other cultural organisations is a similar type of direct marketing.

Direct marketing — especially via the telephone and post — is also a good way to keep in touch with sponsors and volunteers to make sure they feel part of the project.

Merchandising

Depending on your budget, and the amount of advance planning time you have, it may well be worthwhile considering merchandising opportunities. Selling souvenirs related to your event can increase the money you make and provide people with a welcome reminder of an enjoyable experience.

The biggest drawbacks to merchandising are the financial risks which must be faced. First, you have to spend money “up front” buying the merchandise, and you won’t get your money back until it is sold. In addition, there is always a risk that you won’t “read” your audience correctly and will buy things that don’t sell.

If you sell souvenirs at your museum or gallery you will already have some idea about the things that do and don’t sell. Of course most museums, galleries and souvenir shops stock a range of familiar items — teaspoons, postcards, tea towels, coffee mugs, key rings, clothing such as T-shirts, windcheaters, scarves, hats and caps, tapes and CDs. Exhibition catalogues, booklets on the history of the area, collections of local poetry or stories, handcrafted items, local produce, toys, prints and photographs, bookmarks, pens, pencils and rubbers, jewellery, and items unique to the collection (such as model ships at a maritime museum) may also sell well.

Merchandising for special events should be undertaken cautiously, since you only have a limited amount of time to sell the items. If you are hosting a travelling exhibition check with the organisers to see if they have any merchandising items which can be included, or if they can put you in contact with other institutions hosting the exhibit. It may be possible to obtain merchandise from the previous venue, or pass on anything you can’t sell to the next venue.

While some merchandise suppliers will provide generic merchandise on a sale-or-return basis, many do not. Check the details before you order, and remember they won’t sell merchandise which has been branded (with your name, the name or date of the event, etc.) on a return basis. Therefore, for short term events and exhibitions it is best to limit the number of things which are specifically “branded” for the event.

Check with the Centenary of Federation Queensland organisers to find out about Centenary merchandise which might be included as part of your merchandising, and which you could offer for sale in your museum or gallery shop during 2001. A word of warning about items with specific event dates and calendars — be cautious. You could be left holding a lot of “out of date” merchandise and lose money.

After the event

Once the event is over you will have a number of wind-up activities to do, most of which were covered in the previous section. However, it is a good idea to spend some extra time on your media and publicity follow-up. Contact the media and thank them if they have covered your event. Whether they covered it or not, supply them with final information – attendance figures, public or critics' reactions, the amount of money raised (if it was a fundraising or charitable event), etc. Supplying them with photos and media releases will give you one final opportunity for coverage.

It is a good idea to have an album, scrapbook or file which contains copies and originals of photographs, newspaper clippings and information on radio and television coverage. Audio tapes and video tapes will also be useful as a record of what appeared in the media.

Even if the event is a one-off activity, post-event publicity is very important. Your sponsors and volunteers, local government bodies and funding authorities will see – in print – some positive publicity about the activity with which they were so involved.

And, if after you've all had a chance to recover, you decide it was really very worthwhile and you wouldn't mind doing it again someday, you'll find post-event publicity can be useful for generating public awareness and interest ("It sounds like it was really good, I wish we'd gone – we'll definitely go next year"), and encouraging sponsors and volunteers to participate in the future.

Marketing, public relations and publicity checklist

- Set your promotional budget
- Identify the best media to reach your target audiences
 - Print: newspapers, magazines
 - Broadcast: radio, television
 - Direct mail: Who should receive letters or phone calls?
 - Internet: If you intend to put your event on the web, who will set up the page or site?
- Prepare a publicity schedule
 - What media will you approach?
 - When will you approach them? Prepare a regular schedule of media releases to build awareness and interest. Start at least two months prior to the event, and increase the number and frequency of releases up to the start of the event.
 - Prepare and send out media releases.
 - What special activities and publicity will you do to promote the event? You might consider interviews, speeches, competitions, photo opportunities, etc.
- Identify advertising activities
 - Where will you advertise?
 - What will your schedule be?
 - Design and produce your advertising.
 - Check accuracy when the ad appears.
- Prepare the launch and closing events (see Section 10).
- Plan public relations activities for members, volunteers, etc.
- Monitor publicity received – keep track of both paid and unpaid publicity
- Send thank-you letters and final media releases to the media afterwards

2 / Audience strategies

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3 / Organising committees

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4 / Volunteer management

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5 / Financial management and responsibilities

Museum Methods, 1.3 Legal concerns for museums and galleries, Museums Australia (NSW), Sydney.

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6 / Site selection, venue organisation and management

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8 / Risk management

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Copyright Council of Australia

Arts Law Centre of Australia

Arts Management Advisory Group

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10 / Launches, openings, closings

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Museum Methods, 1.13 The news release, Museums Australia (NSW), Sydney.

Museum Methods, 1.17 Customer service and public relations, Museums Australia (NSW), Sydney.

Museum Methods, 6.6 Dealing with local government, Museums Australia (NSW), Sydney.

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Online resources

AMOL Australian Museums On Line, <http://amol.org.au>

Australia Council, <http://www.ozco.gov.au>

Fuel for Arts, <http://fuel4arts.com.au>

Arts Info, <http://www.artsinfo.net.au>

- advertising** any form of paid, non-personal promotion (print or broadcast, posters or billboards, etc.)
- awareness** the consumer's ability to remember cultural attractions and the names of museums, galleries, etc. and/or something about them
- business plan** a written document outlining the mission, values, aims, objectives, and goals of an organisation along with actions and timetables designed to meet those goals and objectives
- co-operative advertising** advertising programs in which several organisations share costs
- copyright** the protection of a creative work (artwork, written items, installations, music, etc.) from unauthorised use
- direct marketing** the promotion of activities which involve direct contact between the supplier and the consumer
- familiarisation (famils)** an organised trip designed to provide first-hand, on-site experience for travel buyers, conference organisers, journalists and travel consultants
- focus groups** research method using small groups, led by a moderator in an informal environment
- font** range of type styles which can be used for printed materials
- geographic segmentation** dividing markets or groups of people by city, state, region, or by the size of the community (urban, suburban, rural, or remote)
- goals** the primary intentions of an organisation; the things it wants to achieve
- incentives** rewards for employees who have achieved set targets or goals
- in-kind sponsorship** sponsorship of an event, group or charitable cause which does not involve giving cash donations, rather it involves the company's products or services
- layout** the plan or design of how a print advertisement or brochure will look when completed
- logo** the unique presentation of a product name, font style, symbol, or other item used to identify a brand or business
- marketing** the business technique for identifying and meeting needs through exchanges. It includes finding out what people want and need, developing products to meet those needs, then pricing, distributing and promoting them
- marketing mix** the combination of marketing variables that the firm uses to achieve its objectives, including price, distribution, product development, and promotion
- marketing strategy** the analysis of the organisation, its operating environment, competition and objectives in order to develop tactics to meet its goals
- markets** groups of individuals with shared needs or demands
- media conference** meeting at which the spokesperson for an organisation delivers information to the media and answers questions
- media release** written information prepared and distributed to the media
- mission statement** a description of a business's philosophy and goals
- merchandising** products and souvenirs carrying the organisation's name or logo, designed to be sold to customers or used as gifts or give-aways
- niche marketing** developing and promoting products to meet the needs and wants of specific geographic, demographic or psychographic groups
- objectives** specific targets set and activities undertaken to achieve goals
- positioning** establishing an image for a product or service
- potential markets** all the people who express an interest in a product or service
- press kit** folder containing media releases, photographs and other background information which can be distributed to media reporters to give them background information about an organisation
- press release** see media release
- product** something offered to a consumer to satisfy a

- need; it can involve both goods and services
- promotion*** the way we inform audiences and the public about our facility and collections
- psychographic segmentation***
the analysis of personal values, attitudes, motivations, and interests of people which influence the way they think and the identification of specific groups with similar characteristics
- public relations***
the management of the public's perception and attitudes towards an organisation
- publicity*** news or information about an organisation and its product, which is not paid for by the business
- qualitative research***
research which is undertaken to understand "why" people do or buy things
- quantitative research***
research which is undertaken to understand the reasons behind people's purchase decisions
- readership*** the number of people who read a publication (usually a higher number than the number of copies sold)
- segmentation*** grouping consumers into categories to identify similar needs and wants
- situation analysis***
a review of the operating environment of an organisation; examines both the external and internal environments and identifies opportunities and threats
- strategic plan*** 3 to 5 year planning which identifies opportunities and threats to a business and develops methods for addressing these opportunities and threats
- SWOT analysis***
an exercise a business undertakes to assess its Strengths and Weaknesses and identify possible Opportunities and Threats
- target market*** a defined group of customers whose needs the business intends to approach
- target marketing***
developing products tailored to meet the needs of identified markets
- vision statement***
a statement which describes the things an organisation has set out to achieve; its goals and purposes

Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM)

PO Box 3373
 South Brisbane Q 4101
 Tel: 07 3840 7779
www.aiccm.org.au

Multicultural Affairs Queensland

PO Box 185
 Brisbane Albert Street Qld 4002
 Tel: 07 3224 5690
 Fax: 07 3224 5691
 Email: MAQ@premiers.qld.gov.au

Museums Australia (Qld)

Level 3, 381 Brunswick Street
 Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
 Tel: 07 3215 0840
 Fax: 07 3215 0841
 Email: mail@maq.org.au
www.maq.org.au

National Trust of Queensland

PO Box 538
 Brisbane Qld 4001
 Tel: 07 3229 1788
 Fax: 07 3229 0146
www.nationaltrustqld.org

Queensland Art Gallery

PO Box 3686
 South Brisbane Qld 4101
 Tel: 07 3840 7333
 Fax: 07 3844 8865
www.qag.qld.gov.au

Queensland Museum

PO Box 3300
 South Brisbane Qld 4101
 Tel: 07 3840 7555
 Fax: 07 3846 1918
www.qmuseum.qld.gov.au

Regional Galleries Association of Queensland

Level 3, 381 Brunswick Street
 Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
 Tel: 07 3215 0820
 Fax: 07 3215 0821
 Email: mail@rgaq.org.au
www.rgaq.org.au

Volunteering Queensland Inc.

Level 6, 333 Adelaide Street
 Brisbane Qld 4000
 Tel: 07 3229 9700
 Fax: 07 3229 2392
www.volunteeringqueensland.org.au

Grants and Funding

For information regarding grants and funding available to museums and galleries in Queensland, please visit the website – www.maq.org.au/profdev/grants/grants.htm – or contact:

Training and Professional Development Program
 (Museums Australia (Qld)/Regional Galleries Association of Queensland)

Level 3, 381 Brunswick Street
 Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
 Tel: 07 3215 0845
 Fax: 07 3215 0846
 Email: profdev@powerup.com.au