

The University of Melbourne

Proposed Cultural Policy Statement

1. Overview

This Cultural Policy sets out guiding principles which assist the University to configure its cultural resources to best serve the whole community. In establishing the Policy, it is recognized that cultural expression itself is, and should be, beyond institutional control, but that clearly articulated institutional values, principles and strategies can significantly influence development, understanding and benefits of cultural programs.

1.1 The Context

The University's Strategic Plan *Growing Esteem* recognises that the University aspires to be a public-spirited institution highly regarded for making distinctive contributions to society in research, teaching and knowledge transfer. The study, practice, publication and performance of cultural works is at the heart of the University's activities and will play a key role in determining whether the University's aspirations are met.

Knowledge Transfer involves conceiving the University as in a two-way exchange of knowledge and skills with the wider community, to the mutual benefit of both. The challenge for the University is to become more accessible to non-academic communities and potential partners. Such parties bring other resources and expertise, along with their own agendas, but when it works well, Knowledge Transfer results in academic forms of knowledge and expertise finding new applications, purposes and platforms beyond the typical reach of scholarship.

The University's portfolio of cultural resources plays a significant role in Knowledge Transfer. Exhibitions by University collections, galleries and museums; performances by the Melbourne Theatre Company and University performers, dancers and musicians; publications, lectures or short courses on cultural subjects by the University; the substantial output of Melbourne University Publishing; campus festivals, prizes, and awards; and the commissioning of new works of art and music all supplement the more formal types of disciplinary discourse taught in the University. These activities enrich the "Melbourne Experience" for students, and engage communities in collective experiences, providing opportunities for reflection and conversation on the never-ending questions of how we make our lives meaningful, our work valuable and our values workable.

The University is therefore an owner, patron, and agent in cultural life, as well as being an educational institution with a significant role in the training and showcasing of professional writers, visual and performing artists, filmmakers and designers, arts teachers, curators and administrators, and the education of their audiences.

1.2 The Collections and Programs

The University has formal processes for establishing and managing its cultural collections and programs. Each is the responsibility of a single University division or entity, with a designated officer appointed as manager. As well as teaching collections and digital or virtual resources, the University currently has 31 cultural collections, many units offering cultural programs, and various applied research or outreach projects. These are listed at the end of the Policy.

2. Policy

2.1 Vision

The Melbourne vision of a fine university is one where a triple helix of sharply-focussed, well-supported research, teaching and knowledge transfer remain tightly bound, each shaping and reinforcing the other. To be effective, therefore, cultural activities should both shape and shadow the University's research and teaching priorities, and be informed by active public engagement.

As a custodian and manager of cultural resources, the University is committed to the propositions that its cultural inventory should be documented and preserved, accessible to students and the general community, illuminated by research and teaching, and engaged with the community as widely as possible. As an agent in cultural life, the University seeks selective

partnerships as a sponsor or patron where benefits are compelling. As a place of education, the University wishes to engender among its staff and students a sense of our cultural heritage, values and ideals, and an understanding of what the University has to offer among those who will deliver it to the community.

2.2 Principles

The manager of each University cultural resource is the primary advocate, planner and leader for that activity. Together, they affirm the principles of

1. Conserving, documenting, and coherently developing the University's cultural collections and programs
2. Facilitating access to them for staff, students and the public
3. Advocating research on them within and without the University
4. Supporting educational understanding of them for students and the public
5. Maximizing support for them from external partners and public participation
6. Co-ordinating plans and programs to optimize benefit for the whole University
7. Celebrating and promoting the University as a distinctive cultural centre

2.3 Strategies

The University's cultural programs encompass many dimensions of interaction between academia and wider society. A sharper focus on them will ensure the institution is more widely connected to non-academic partners and better able to develop, co-produce and transfer a distinctive array of cultural programs to the community.

In setting priorities, structuring programs, and deploying institutional resources, Melbourne will serve local and international communities best by selective engagement. A Cultural and Community Relations Advisory Group has been established, with the Assistant Vice Chancellor (University Relations) as chair, to provide advice on these matters. In allocation of resources, priority will be given to cultural programs and projects:

- where the University has a distinctive contribution to make
- where the University's research and other activities are of the highest standard
- when the benefits for the University are compelling
- which are configured around those disciplinary and societal issues in which the institution can make a difference
- which combine the efforts of staff, students and external partners.

As indicated in *Growing Esteem: the University of Melbourne Strategic Plan 2006*, the University has resolved to:

- consider how its cultural activities and assets can be more explicitly used for extending the University's work to the community;
- explore ways of making the University's outstanding cultural resources accessible to wider audiences; and
- explore ways of applying performing, visual and literary arts skills to social needs

The University will also promote closer links and collaboration between the Faculty of Music, the Victorian College of the Arts and the Victorian Opera.

2.4 Reviews

From 2006, the University has resolved to review its programs on a three-year cycle. The Assistant Vice Chancellor (University Relations) will be responsible for determining the timetable and conduct of these reviews, which will be reported to the University Relations Committee of Council.

3. References

- Growing Esteem: the University of Melbourne Strategic Plan 2006.*
Policy and Minimum Requirements for the Management of Cultural Collections, 2006.
R. 17.1,R14 Cultural and Community Relations Advisory Group Terms of Reference.
Cultural Collections Committee Terms of Reference, 2005.

The University's Cultural Resources

1. Collections and individual heritage items

Art, Music

- Classics and Archaeology Collection (at the Ian Potter Museum of Art)
- Grainger Museum and Collection
- Ian Potter Museum of Art (the University of Melbourne Art Collection)
- Musical Instruments—Rare and Historic examples (Faculty of Music)
- Print Collection, Baillieu Library
- Victorian College of the Arts Collection

Australian Aboriginal Culture and History

- Donald Thomson Collection (on loan to Museum Victoria)

Botanical, Natural Sciences

- Dookie Campus Museum
- F.A. Singleton Museum (Earth Sciences)
- Godfrey Howitt Entomology Collection (on loan to Museum Victoria)
- Tiegs Zoology Museum
- University of Melbourne Herbarium
- Veterinary Science Anatomy Collection

Medicine, Dentistry

- Bionic Ear Archive
- Dental Museum
- Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology
- Medical History Museum

Rare Books, Maps, Manuscripts, Archives

- Architecture and Planning Library—Rare Materials Collection
- Brownless Biomedical Library—Rare Books
- Classics and Archaeology Library
- Earth Sciences Library—Rare Books
- East Asian Collection, Baillieu Library—Rare Books
- Land & Food Resources Library, Burnley—Rare Books
- Legal Resource Centre—Rare Books
- Maps Library—Rare and Historic Maps
- Music Library—Rare Collections
- Special Collections, Baillieu Library
- University of Melbourne Archives

Sciences, Engineering

- Electrical Engineering Education Museum
- Michell Crankless Engine Co. Collection
- MONIAC Economics Model Machine
- Physics Museum
- School of Chemistry Collection (on loan to Museum Victoria)
- Surveying and Geomatic Engineering Collection
- Venturi Water Meter (Civil and Environmental Engineering)

2. Programs

Public Lectures, Courses, Educational Services

- Community Access Program
- Foundation Programs (VCA)
- Lectures and seminars of the Research Centres
- Public lectures, forums, conferences
- Public music testing, Australian Music Examinations Board (Vic) Ltd
- Short courses, summer programs
- University of Melbourne Extension Program

Performing Arts

- Concert Program, Australian National Academy of Music
- Concert Program, Faculty of Music
- Concert Program, School of Music (VCA)
- Melbourne Theatre Company
- MUDFest
- Performance and Puppetry Program, School of Production (VCA)
- Performance Program, School of Dance (Victorian College of the Arts)
- Performance Program, School of Drama (Victorian College of the Arts)
- Theatre Board—student theatre

Publications

- Alumni newsletters
- *Art, Events, Ideas* (magazine of the Ian Potter Museum of Art)
- *Bright Sparcs*
- Exhibition catalogues: Baillieu Library, Grainger Museum, Ian Potter Museum of Art, VCA Gallery
- *Hoardhouse: News from the Grainger Collection*
- Lyrebird Press (Editions de l'Oiseau-lyre)
- *Meanjin*
- *Melbourne Art Journal*
- *Melbourne Journal of Technical Studies in Art.*
- *Melbourne University Magazine*
- Melbourne University Publishing
- *University of Melbourne Archives Bulletin*
- *University of Melbourne Library Journal*
- *VCA News*
- Virtual Museum (for the Classics and Archaeology Collection)

Scholarships, Awards, Commissions

- Albert Maggs Composition Award
- Commission of new works of art program
- Dorcas McLean Violin Scholarship
- Grainger Composition Prize and Grainger Performance Prize
- Raaka Indigenous Arts Award
- Scholarships in the writing, visual and performing arts of Faculties of Arts, Music, VCA

Exhibitions

- Annual program of Cultural Collections exhibitions and Art in the Library exhibitions in the Baillieu Library
- Annual program of the George Paton Gallery
- Annual program of the Ian Potter Museum of Art
- Annual program of the VCA gallery
- Exhibition program of the students of the VCA School of Art
- Grainger Museum permanent and changing exhibitions (building currently closed for conservation works)
- Medical History Museum permanent and changing exhibitions
- Physics Museum permanent display
- Other Cultural Collections permanent and temporary displays around the campuses, including the sculpture in the grounds and other artworks

Film screenings

- Annual film screenings by students of the VCA School of Film and Television

Partnerships

- Commercial consultancies to business and government on art acquisition, conservation, visual and performing arts events, musical entertainment, and other matters, including to State and national cultural bodies such as the National Gallery of Victoria and the Australian National Gallery.
- Lending programs of art works, artifacts and documents to external institutions through University of Melbourne Archives, Grainger Museum, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Medical History Museum and other Cultural Collections
- Participation by staff as judges of arts, dance, drama and music awards and competitions
- Participation in festival programs e.g. Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, Fringe Festival, Comedy Festival
- Participation by staff in advisory boards and committees and boards of Trustees of the Australia Council, Arts Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria, Public Records Office of Victoria and other cultural institutions, and of commercial bodies such as art auction houses.
- Touring exhibitions by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, VCA Gallery and other Cultural Collections
- Partnerships between the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation and collecting institutions in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, East Timor, Hong Kong, the Philippines, New Caledonia, the UK and the USA.
- Active contributions to professional organizations in the cultural field, including the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material, Australian Society of Archivists, Museums Australia, and the Australian Library and Information Association.

3. Applied Research, Outreach

- Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation research collaborations in Asia-Pacific region and other ARC Industry Linkage grants
- Music Therapy Research Unit (Music)
- National Music Therapy Research Unit (Music)
- Risky Business (Creative Arts)
- Writing Centre for Scholars and Researchers (School of Graduate Studies)