

Australian Sports Museum

Collection Policy

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> Background

Purpose

To provide guidelines to staff and potential donors/lenders regarding the acquisition of material into the Australian Sports Museum collection.

Scope

The Australian Sports Museum (ASM) is a collaborative museum of international significance that exhibits sporting artefacts which are either owned by the ASM, on loan from individuals or on loan from bodies, including (but not restricted to) the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust (MCGT) through the Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum (AGOSOM) collection, the Melbourne Cricket Club Museum (MCCM) collection, the Melbourne Cricket Club Library (MCCL), the Melbourne Cricket Club Archives (MCCA), the Australian Football League (AFL), Cricket Australia (CA) and the Australian Racing Museum (ARM).

Additional stakeholders contributing artefacts or assistance with displays include the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), Victorian Olympic Council (VOC), the Sport Australia Hall of Fame (SAHoF) and other national sporting bodies.

> Ownership and Management

The Australian Sports Museum opened in March 2008 as the National Sports Museum (NSM). Its name was formally updated in December 2019 whilst the museum was closed for six months for refurbishment.

The Australian Sports Museum Limited (ASML) is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, and the liability of members is limited as provided in the Constitution of the ASML.

The ASM collection is managed by the MCC Club Services and Heritage Department through the ASML Board, and is housed at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) as a centrepiece of the Olympic Stand.

An ASM Advisory Board (established in February 2008 as the National Sports Museum Advisory Board) features major ASM stakeholders and provides advice to the MCC on content and exhibitions for the ASM.

The Melbourne Cricket Club (as Ground Manager of the MCG) and the MCG Trust assumes the financial risk in relation to the ongoing operation, and recurrent expenditure, of the ASM.

> Statement of Purpose

Vision

The Australian Sports Museum will ensure that there is a greater understanding of how sporting culture has shaped Australia and helped to define what it means to be an Australian. It will be the world's leading sports museum, admired internationally and loved locally.

Mission

To harness the unique power of sport to share Australia's story.

ASML Charter

The ASML has a charter to encourage greater appreciation of sports by all Australians, including the history of sport in Australia and the individuals who have had significant influence in this area, by:

- Operating a sports museum at the Melbourne Cricket Ground
- Coordinating exhibitions and related events
- Providing the community with access to a wide range of unique Australian sporting related artefacts, and associated research material
- Promoting and developing partnerships with national sporting bodies to ensure a strong national sports representation

- Encouraging greater participation in sports

> Collection Development

Background

The ASM was opened to the public in March 2008 (as the NSM) and the formal establishment of a collecting entity occurred in October 2008. The ASM collection is built by the donation of objects. Donation of objects to the ASML for the ASM are tax deductible if undertaken through the federal government's Cultural Gifts Program. This is communicated to potential donors when appropriate.

Inward loans to the ASM collection may be considered for exhibition purposes. These offers will be assessed in line with exhibition schedules by MCC Club Services and Heritage Department staff. See Inward Loans (p10).

Consideration Factors

The development of the ASM collection will be informed by a number of factors, to prevent the duplication of effort or collections:

- the existence of specialised repositories of sporting material, with whom ASM will work in association to build up collections of relevant objects.
- the material held in associated collections displayed in the ASM (MCCM and AGOSOM).

Collection Focus Areas

The ASM may collect objects relating to all sports played in Australia or by Australians.

The collection of material relating to certain, high profile, sports (see below) will be proactively encouraged.

Four specific types of material will be acquired for the ASM collection as a priority:

- Objects that relate to contemporary champions, past champions and significant events in Australian sporting history.
- Objects that provide specific and focused examples of 'grass roots' participation in various sports across all eras.
- Objects that demonstrate the underpinning social importance of sport to Australians of all ages across all eras.
- Objects that demonstrate Australian involvement in the development of sport.

Caveats to Collecting

Due to cricket's status of national importance across all of Australia, the ASM will collect across many aspects of the sport but avoid collecting in competition with the MCCM. (See MCCM Collection Policy.)

Due to the ASM's location within the MCG, the ASM will collect across many aspects of the ground's history, especially the ground's long and close association with Australian football, but will avoid collecting in competition with the MCCM. (See MCCM Collection Policy.)

Certain sports will not be collected due to agreements with particular sporting bodies or collecting entities.

Olympic Games objects will only be collected by the ASM in exceptional circumstances, since the AGOSOM collection takes priority when collecting Olympic material.

Collecting Principles

Objects suitable for collection may include, but are not restricted to, sports equipment, uniforms, medals, trophies, documents, letters, diaries, artworks, commemorative items and ephemera. Audiovisual material such as film, photographs and audio or visual recordings will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The following criteria exist for accepting or declining material offered to the ASM. All offers are assessed by the relevant MCC Club Services and Heritage Department staff.

Collecting Criteria

Preference will be given to objects that are:

- Directly related to a significant Australian sporting individual, organisation, or event – through use of, and/or participation in.
- Offered with relevant documentation demonstrating provenance and history.

Collecting Guidelines

- Objects that duplicate existing collection holdings are likely to be declined.
- Badly damaged objects will usually be declined unless the damage is less important than the item's representational value.
- Objects which cannot be properly displayed, stored or conserved, or at a cost that cannot be met by the ASM within its budgets, will not be collected.
- If a collection is offered but it contains material that is not required (surplus, damaged or duplicate objects) the preference will always be to take only the most relevant elements.
- Conditional offers (for example, that objects be perpetually displayed) will usually be declined.

In addition, the ASM reserves the right to deaccession objects. See Deaccessioning and Disposal (p7).

Acquisitions

Assessment of Acquisition Offers

An offer of material is preferred in written form, with accompanying images. Information about the object(s) use, condition, history, provenance and significance is also appreciated in order for an accurate assessment to be made.

All objects offered to the ASM will be reviewed by appropriately trained and experienced MCC Club Services and Heritage Department staff in accordance with the following, responsive, procedure:

- All objects offered will be assessed in the first instance by a trained staff member. A staff member will, in a timely manner in order to provide a swift response, undertake appropriate levels of research on all objects being offered.
- The staff member will, specifically:
 - research the existing ASM collection holdings, to assess similar material or relevant gaps in the collection.
 - seek the advice of appropriate individuals such as relevant members of the Collections or MCC Library areas or other experts.
 - refer to this Collections Policy and, in particular, the Collection Focus Areas (p4) and the Collecting Principles (p4)
 - provide a written assessment (Acquisition Proposal Assessment form) to the MCC Curator recommending whether the offer should be accepted or declined.
- The MCC Curator will table all recommendations to the MCC Manager, Museum & Heritage Services for review and approval.
- The MCC General Manager, Club Services and Heritage, the MCC CEO or the ASML Board may also be consulted with if appropriate.

Declining Acquisition Offers

The staff member dealing with the offer will communicate the declining of the offer either verbally or in writing.

Acceptance of Acquisition Offers

The staff member dealing with the offer will communicate the acceptance of the offer in writing. The transaction of ownership from the donor to Australian Sports Museum Limited will be documented on an ASM Deed of Gift. Donations of objects will not be formally accepted until the donor has signed an ASM Deed of Gift.

Acquisitions procedure

The acquisition of objects into the ASM collection will be informed by the Collecting Principles (p6). Processing of acquisitions will conform to established collection management procedures and will be recorded to agreed standards in the Collection Management System, Vernon.

Deaccessioning and Disposal

Relevant MCC Club Services and Heritage Department staff will be responsible for identifying items suitable for deaccessioning. In all instances this will involve ratification from the MCC General Manager, Club Services and Heritage and the ASML Board. Every step of the process will be recorded in detail and all documentation will be retained.

Deaccession Criteria

Objects will only be considered for deaccessioning from the ASM collection if at least one of the following applies:

- The object no longer complies with the museum's collection policy.
- The object is damaged beyond repair.
- Conservation and storage costs are beyond the means of the museum.
- The object is a lesser quality duplicate of an object already owned by the museum and does not have provenance to provide it with value beyond its own inherent physical interest.
- The object lacks any supporting information to enable precise identification or to establish its relevance to the collection.

In addition, there must be no ongoing dispute over legal ownership involving one or more external parties.

Deaccession Procedure

Objects will, in the first instance, be considered by the MCC Curator and the MCC Manager, Museum & Heritage Services to fit the above criteria. The following procedures will be followed:

- Written recommendations by the MCC Curator and the MCC Manager, Museum & Heritage Services will be required and will include details of source and provenance of object, reasons for seeking deaccession and suggested avenue of disposal.
- All potential deaccessioning will be considered sensitive and the advice of the MCC General Manager, Club Services and Heritage will be sought on all occasions.
- The MCC General Manager, Club Services and Heritage will request ratification from the ASML Board.
- A formal statement will be produced, confirming the ASML Board's ratification and confirming the agreed avenue of disposal.

Disposal Procedure

- In the first instance the object will be offered to the original donor if that organization / individual or their family can be determined.

If, after thorough investigation, the donor or family of donor is untraceable, or if they indicate they have no further interest in the object(s), the object(s) will then be:

- Offered to, or swapped with, an appropriate public collection and appropriate paperwork completed transferring legal ownership.
- Used as an interpretative tool (for example, in visitor programs).
- Sold by public auction if appropriate, with paperwork to be completed transferring legal ownership. All funds obtained from the sale of a deaccessioned item will be used ONLY for acquiring items for the collection and/or conservation of the existing collection.
- If the above avenues of disposal are unavailable the object(s) can be destroyed or recycled (if appropriate).

- The object will be held for a “cooling off” period of 12 months, after which time the decision to deaccession will be reviewed by ASML Board and the course of action confirmed.
- Staff, volunteers, board members and their respective families are all prohibited from obtaining deaccessioned objects.

The disposal process will be undertaken in a transparent and open manner (including an announcement on the ASM website).

Record Keeping

Records detailing the disposal of an object will be kept in perpetuity and be made available in response to any reasonable inquiry.

Inward Loans

Loans may be accepted if the objects are required for short or long term display in the ASM. Where possible, the ASM will rely on objects in its own collection and within the associated AGOSOM and MCCM collections to maintain displays.

Lending Entities

A number of lending entities support the ASM content:

- Current and former athletes
- Private collectors
- Descendants of athletes
- National sporting bodies

Loan Agreements

Irrespective of their deductible gift recipient status, all lending entities, both individuals and sporting stakeholders will be invited to enter into a standard loan agreement whereby they agree to loan specifically requested objects for display in the ASM for a renewable fixed term.

The Loan Agreement sets out the parameters of the loan and lists the objects to be loaned in an accompanying schedule. It also stipulates the responsibilities of the object owner and the ASML.

While the ASM prefers to issue standard inward loan paperwork, on occasion the ASM will use the outward loan paperwork of another institution, if required.

A Loan Agreement must be read, understood, agreed and countersigned prior to the ASM taking receipt of the objects at the Melbourne Cricket Ground

In addition, significant sporting body stakeholders may also be invited to enter into a detailed agreement with the ASML. This high level agreement:

- contains general provisions for obtaining sporting artefacts from the lending entity for display in the ASM, and
- outlines the cooperative and collaborative framework to provide information, access to their collections or support to the ASM displays, exhibitions and programs.

> Collection Use

Exhibitions

The ASM will produce and host exhibitions of varying size and duration, using a range of objects and media. The ASM recognises that whilst this Collection Policy is primarily defined in terms of sporting material, its exhibitions, displays, and visitor programs may investigate other themes that overlap with sport.

It is recognised that there will be some sports that will have a greater public interest from time to time and this will be reflected, where possible, in displays.

The ASM is currently comprised of permanent eight galleries:

- Sporting Nation
- Olympics
- Sport Australia Hall of Fame
- Horse Racing
- Cricket
- Australian football
- Game On - Interactives Gallery

The MCC Museum is physically attached to the ASM and also constitutes an additional ASM gallery for the majority of days each year.

The ASM also features the ISS Exhibitions Gallery, for the display of temporary exhibitions. These exhibitions are either curated internally by MCC Club Services and Heritage Department staff, external institutions or individual curators.

Research and Access

The ASM is an important resource and, where possible, access will be provided to the collection for anyone researching and writing about sport. The ASM will strive to present socially responsible public programs that promote the ASM collection and encourage individuals to reflect on the relevance of sport in our community. Access shall be informed by the MCC Heritage Collections Access Policy.

Outward Loans

The ASM will cooperate with other organisations in order to foster common objectives and to attempt to avoid competitive collecting. ASM material may be loaned to reputable organisations where satisfactory standards of museum practice, such as Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Victoria)'s Museum Accreditation Program (MAP), are assured.

> Ethics

Laws and conventions

Activities undertaken by ASM will be governed by the laws of the state of Victoria and the Commonwealth of Australia. Specific museum related activities shall also be informed by the following:

- International Council of Museums Code of Ethics
- Australian Museums and Galleries Association Code of Ethics

> Related Documents

Related documents include:

- Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum Collection Policy
- Melbourne Cricket Club Museum Collection Policy
- MCC Heritage Collections Access Policy

> Definitions and Abbreviations

ASM	The Australian Sports Museum
ASML	Australian Sports Museum Limited
AGOSOM	The Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum
MCCH	Melbourne Cricket Club Heritage Limited
MCG	The Melbourne Cricket Ground
MCCM	The Melbourne Cricket Club Museum
Australian Sports Museum (ASM)	The display space located inside Gate 3, on Level 1 and B1 of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.
Australian Sports Museum collection	The collection of heritage objects owned by Australian Sports Museum Limited and managed by the Melbourne Cricket Club's Club Services and Heritage Department.
Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum collection (AGOSOM collection)	The collection of heritage objects owned by the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust and managed by the Melbourne Cricket Club's Club Services and Heritage Department.
Melbourne Cricket Club Museum (MCC)	The display space located inside the Members Reserve, on Level B1 of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.
Melbourne Cricket Club Museum collection	The collection of heritage objects owned by Melbourne Cricket Club Heritage Limited and managed by Melbourne Cricket Club's Club Services and Heritage Department.

Melbourne Cricket Club Library collection

The collection of reference and resource material owned by Melbourne Cricket Club Heritage Limited and managed by the Melbourne Cricket Club's Club Services and Heritage Department.

Melbourne Cricket Club Archives

The collection of business records owned by the Melbourne Cricket Club and managed by the Melbourne Cricket Club's Club Services and Heritage Department.

Donation

The act of acquiring objects to build the permanent collection and transferring ownership to the Australian Sports Museum Limited.

Inward Loan

The act of borrowing objects belonging to others for the purposes of display.

Deaccession

The administrative act whereby an object is removed from the permanent collection.

> Review

This document will be reviewed annually with major reviews completed prior to the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Victoria) Museum Accreditation Program reaccreditation cycle.