

# Audience development policy

POL-C-003

Version 2.0     29 April 2011

## Contents

1. Title .....	3
2. Introduction .....	3
3. Scope .....	3
4. Principles.....	4
5. Definition of terms .....	5
6. Definition of responsibilities.....	5
7. References .....	5
8. Implementation.....	6

<b>ID</b>	POL-C-003
<b>Version</b>	2.0
<b>Version date</b>	29 April 2011
<b>Type</b>	Council approved
<b>Approval date</b>	Revision approved by Louise Douglas (Assistant Director, Audience, Programs & Partnerships) 18 March 2010
<b>Files</b>	04/1307 (Audience development workshops); 09/243
<b>Availability</b>	Public and all staff
<b>Keywords</b>	Audiences, access, networking, awareness, participation, involvement, community, cultural diversity, visitation
<b>Responsible officer</b>	Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships
<b>History</b>	<p>Access policy version 1.0 approved by Council 16 September 1994</p> <p>Cultural diversity policy version 1.0 approved by Council 15 Mar 1995</p> <p>Community networking policy version 1.0 approved by Council 17 May 1995</p> <p>Networking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities policy version 1.0 approved by Council 15 October 1993</p> <p>Audience development policy version 1.0 approved by Council 25 November 2004</p> <p>Audience development policy version 1.0d approved by Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships 18 March 2010</p>
<b>Review date</b>	August 2012
<b>Related procedures</b>	None
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## 1. Title

Audience development policy

## 2. Introduction

The National Museum of Australia is a major cultural institution, charged with researching, collecting, preserving and exhibiting historical material of the Australian nation. The Museum focuses on the three interrelated areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, Australia's history and society since European settlement in 1788 and the interaction of people with the environment.

Established in 1980, the Museum is a publicly-funded institution, governed as a statutory authority within the Federal arts portfolio. The Museum's new building on Acton Peninsula, Canberra, opened in March 2001.

## 3. Scope

The Museum seeks new ways to attract, maintain and increase diverse audiences and involve them with the Museum in an increasingly competitive environment. The Museum acknowledges the primacy of national audiences and strives to ensure that its range of exhibitions, programs and services are developed within a national framework.

This policy covers audiences who visit the Museum's facilities in Canberra; audiences who access Museum content, programs, services and activities online; and members of the community who become involved with the Museum as volunteers, donors, sponsors or Friends of the National Museum. It also covers audiences who are not yet aware of the Museum's programs and activities.

This policy establishes the principles by which National Museum audiences are identified, serviced and increased. It incorporates aspects of three previous policies focused on access, community networking and networking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

### 3.1 Purpose

This policy provides a framework for:

- developing and enhancing access to the Museum's exhibitions, programs and services
- reflecting Australia's cultural diversity in Museum collections and programs
- promoting the good standing and success of the Museum amongst the widest possible audiences through consultation with all communities
- assisting tourists to understand the Museum's role and to access its resources
- encouraging and supporting existing audiences to make more frequent use of Museum facilities and programs
- assisting underrepresented or disadvantaged audiences to overcome the real or perceived barriers currently discouraging their involvement with the Museum.

### 3.2 Rationale

An effective audience development policy underpins the Museum's strategic priorities. Both the Strategic Plan 2007–2010 and the Mission Statement identify 'engaging and providing access for audiences nationally and internationally' as key Museum activities.

The audience development policy guides the Museum in presenting exhibitions, programs and services which engage and satisfy diverse audiences and in turn maintain and increase the number of people who visit or are involved with the Museum.

## **4. Principles**

### **4.1 Diverse audiences**

The Museum caters for the diverse backgrounds, interests, outlooks and educational levels of Australians. Museum exhibitions, programs and services reflect the diversity of Australia's cultural, social and environmental history and experiences, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **4.2 Social inclusion**

The Museum provides equitable access to its resources for audiences regardless of their location, education level, age, ethnicity, physical or mental ability or language. Exhibitions, services and programs are developed within a socially inclusive framework.

### **4.3 Representation**

The Museum's collections, exhibitions and programs are developed to represent communities and regions across the country to maximise opportunities for visitors to connect to the Museum through recognising themselves, their culture and their life experiences.

### **4.4 Developing the collections**

The Museum's Act requires the Museum to collect historical material that relates to Australia's past, present and future, including a collection of historical material relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Within this framework, the Museum aims to document and celebrate the distinctive characteristics and history of the nation, particularly through collecting programs focused on the peopling of Australia, the creation of culture and the building and development of Australia.

### **4.5 Accessible exhibitions, programs and services**

The Museum seeks to provide access to exhibitions, programs and services which are developed with regard to audience and market research and structured to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

### **4.6 Workplace diversity**

The Museum is an equal opportunity employer and aims to recruit staff who represent the diversity of Australian society. The Museum provides training to foster appreciation and understanding of the Museum's obligations within a culturally diverse community.

The Museum's Act also requires that 'Council shall pursue a policy directed towards securing, under the Council, the development and maintenance of the Gallery and the exhibition of historical material ... by persons who are Aboriginals, Torres Strait Islanders or descendants of Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders'.

### **4.7 Community and identity**

The Museum aims to foster an appreciation of cultural identity and the aspirations of diverse groups. The Museum works to establish strong links with communities in the interpretation, documentation and preservation of their own cultural and natural heritage. It recognises that communities have the right to involvement in the interpretation of their culture and thus play a significant role in assisting the Museum to reflect Australia's cultural diversity.

### **4.8 Research**

Market and audience research makes a significant contribution to understanding our audiences, particularly their behaviour, motivations and satisfaction levels. Programs are developed with regard to this research and evaluated to ensure a strong match between content and audience.

### **4.9 Consultation**

Community consultation is used wherever practicable to ensure exhibitions, programs and services are engaging and meaningful for particular audiences. The Museum recognises that

local knowledge and cultural understanding is required before successful consultation can occur.

#### **4.10 Balance**

The Museum has finite resources and cannot serve all audiences equally at all times. The Museum balances resources between audiences who are relatively easy to reach and those who are more inaccessible, between programs which attract large numbers and others which meet the needs of minority groups, and between initiatives which seek to encourage repeat visitation by existing audiences and those which aim to attract new audiences.

### **5. Definition of terms**

#### **Access**

The process by which the general public use the cultural and physical resources of the Museum.

#### **Audience**

The people who make up the Museum's various publics including all consumers or users of its products, such as visitors, researchers, volunteers, media, institutions, donors and sponsors.

#### **Audience development**

The long-term process of attracting and engaging target audiences and retaining them through strategic, dynamic and sustainable relationships.

#### **Audience and market research**

The discipline that includes visitor surveys, focus groups, interviews, segmentation studies and program evaluation (front-end evaluation conducted in advance of development, formative evaluation conducted during development or summative or remedial evaluation conducted after completion).

#### **Community**

The groups of people who share characteristics or bonds such as ethnicity, religion or experience of a place, location or event.

#### **Cultural diversity**

The expression of life in Australia through ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, politics, philosophy, religion, community identity and subcultural identity. The term encompasses a philosophy that appropriately encourages maintenance of cultural identity whilst sharing common ideals and equality of opportunity.

### **6. Definition of responsibilities**

#### **Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships**

Represents the Museum in managing the implementation of this policy.

#### **Manager, Public Programs and Marketing**

Assists the Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships in the implementation of this policy.

### **7. References**

*Annual Access and Equity Report*, National Museum of Australia, 2004

*Client Service Charter*, National Museum of Australia, 2003

*Disability Action Plan*, National Museum of Australia, 1997

Mission Statement is also quoted - add to references?

*National Museum of Australia Act 1980*

*Report against the Commonwealth Disability Strategy*, National Museum of Australia, 2004

*Strategic Plan 2007–2010*, National Museum of Australia

## **8. Implementation**

The operation of this policy is undertaken according to the guidelines set out in the audience development framework.

### **8.1 Coverage**

Whole of Museum: exhibitions, programs, activities and operations.

### **8.2 Other related policies**

Collections development policy  
Communications policy  
Cultural diversity policy  
Interpretation policy  
Learning and education policy  
Outreach policy  
Research and scholarship policy  
Sponsorship and development policy

### **8.3 Exclusions**

None

### **8.4 Superseded policies**

This policy supersedes in conjunction with the Outreach policy:

<b>Former policy/ies title</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Version date</b>	<b>Council approval date</b>
Access policy	1.0	Sep 1994	16 Sep 1994
Cultural diversity	1.0	Mar 1995	15 Mar 1995
Community networking policy	1.0	May 1995	17 May 1995
Networking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	1.0	Oct 1993	15 Oct 1993
Audience development policy	1.0	Apr 2005	25 Nov 2004
Audience development policy	1.0d	18 Mar 2010	25 Nov 2004

### **8.5 Monitoring**

Implementation of this policy is monitored by the Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships and Senior Managers of the Audience, Programs and Partnerships Division, in conjunction with Executive Management.

This policy will be reviewed in August 2012.