



Museum of Australian Democracy Collection Development Plan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daryl Karp', is positioned above the printed name.

Daryl Karp

Director

November 2021

Due for review in 2026

1. Our Collection

Collection Vision

The Museum of Australian Democracy Collection is connected to and located within the historical heart of Australian government. It captures the ideas, movements, individuals and events of Australian democracy.

Collection Statement of Significance

The Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) Collection is of national, regional and local significance in documenting and illustrating the ideas, movements, events, people and processes that shaped, and continue to shape, Australian democracy.

The collection offers opportunities for research and display across a range of topics of social and political history. Many collection items combine political, aesthetic and social significance. Key areas within the collection are the development and workings of Australian democracy and government; prime ministers; political influencers and movements; and, at the heart of the collection, Old Parliament House, the home of Australia's federal parliament from 1927 to 1988.

Old Parliament House was designed by John Smith Murdoch in the interwar Stripped Classical style and is now a Commonwealth and nationally listed heritage place. The building and its in-situ furnishings hold exceptional aesthetic significance. They also have symbolic meanings for many Australians who visit and experience the building as an historic and civic space, and a space for debates and discussion. The building has additional social significance due to its links with a living community. People who have worked in the building, including politicians, journalists and general staff, have affection for it and support its preservation.

MoAD's collection reflects changes in Australian government, politics and society, and explores the spirit of democracy in a place where democracy was enacted in this nation.

Sub-collections

The Museum of Australian Democracy Collection is divided into three distinct sub-collections.

The *Heritage Collection* comprises all the objects that have a direct association with Old Parliament House. These include the furniture and fittings that were designed for and used in the building, and other objects that were used during the life of the place as a working parliament. This collection forms part of the National and Commonwealth Heritage Listings for the place and is therefore subject to the requirements for conservation and interpretation under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The *Democracy Collection* is the collection of material culture that aligns with the purpose of the museum as a place to explore and communicate the ideas and issues around democracy and government in Australia.

The *Interpretation and Learning Collection* is the group of reproduction and facsimile pieces and learning and display props that do not require the level of care provided to the more significant

Heritage Collection and *Democracy Collection* items. There are fewer restrictions on how objects in this collection can be used to interpret the museum's values.

2. Collecting Context

Collecting Principles

Collecting at MoAD is directed by the following principles:

- *Significance* – The object has historic, aesthetic, scientific or research, and/or social or spiritual significance (as per *Significance 2.0*) that:
 1. relates to the vision, statement of significance and the four collecting areas outlined in section 3 of this Plan
 2. relates to content areas nominated as collection development priorities and related projects as outlined in the forward program
 3. will assist in making a lasting contribution to understanding and interpreting the ideas, movements, individuals and events of Australian democracy.

- *Provenance* – The origin and/or subsequent history of the object or collection is thoroughly documented and authenticated to the highest standards as outlined in sector charters and guidelines, and consistent with ethical and legal requirements. The Museum does not acquire material reasonably suspected to have been looted or stolen.

- *Originality or rarity* – The object or collection is unique or relatively rare, a fine example of its type, or not well represented in MoAD's collection, or in other museum collections.

- *Research value* – The object or collection has potential to hold evidence of what existed in the past, to add to associated stories, or to be used in comparison with other similar objects or collections.

- *Display and interpretation value* – The object or collection has a high potential to communicate meaning or add to the presentation of ideas and stories.

- *Condition* – The object or collection is suitable for long-term storage, preservation and display with appropriate and sustainable resource outlay, and consideration of whole-of-life costs.

Collection Development Approaches

MoAD develops its collections by seeking significant objects that document and represent the ideas, movements, individuals and events of Australian democracy. MoAD takes a representative and selective approach to developing the collection, and actively engages with communities to target specific collection needs.

MoAD's collecting activities address short and medium-term priorities associated with exhibitions, public programs and contemporary issues and events. Long term priorities, addressed by strategic collecting, ensures we collect today the objects that will be important for telling our history in the future.

The MoAD Collection is developed through:

- *Donation* – MoAD receives offers from the public of objects or collections for donation. In some cases, the museum receives donation offers made under the Cultural Gifts Program, administered by the Ministry for the Arts, which offers tax incentives to encourage people to donate items of cultural

significance to public museums. All donations are assessed to ensure acquisitions meet MoAD's collection priorities outlined in this document.

- *Purchase* – MoAD purchases objects at auction; through commercial vendors; by agreement with private vendors; and by commissioning the creation of objects including replicas for the purpose of display. Purchased objects are assessed to ensure acquisitions meet the collecting priorities outlined in this document.
- *Deaccessioning* – MoAD selectively deaccessions objects from the collection if reasons to do so are justified. Deaccessioning is a considered and deliberative process, and an important part of refining and developing the collection. Deaccessioning involves the analysis of objects using MoAD's Collecting Principles and Collecting Categories outlined in this document.

Governance

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House is a corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. MoAD's collection development is governed in accordance with this document, MoAD's Strategic Plan 2018-2023, the Old Parliament House Heritage Strategy 2021-2024, and the Old Parliament House and Curtilage Heritage Management Plan 2021-2026. The two heritage documents are legislative requirements under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Museum respects the moral rights of the creators of works acquired for the collections by ensuring the integrity of use and proper attribution of those works.

The Museum recognises the principles in the:

- *Ethics and Provenance* statement from the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (2014)
- *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material (2015)* from the Australian Government Ministry for the Arts

Museum staff abide by the codes of ethics of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) and Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA).

In 2021 the MoAD collections comprised more than 35,000 objects. Objects in the *Heritage Collection* and the *Democracy Collection* are deemed irreplaceable and are displayed and handled according to the highest standards of museum care. Policies 1.10 and 7.1 of the Old Parliament House and Curtilage Heritage Management Plan 2021-2026 specify the high-level policy context for managing the collection. The Collection Management Procedures provide the detailed guidelines and processes for every aspect of the care of the collections. Additions to the collection are subject to the scrutiny and procedures of the Acquisitions Committee according to its terms of reference. The Committee delegate is the Deputy Director of MoAD.

3. Collecting Categories

Category 1 – Development of democracy and the systems of Australia's federal government

A collection of material which explores the ideas of democracy, places Australia's democracy in a global context and reveals the workings of Australia's government.

This category includes material culture that illuminates and documents:

- the history and practices of democratic ideas with a direct link to Australia's democracy;
- seminal moments in the history of Australia's democracy;
- the system and institutions of Australia's government; and
- responses to the system and institutions of Australia's government.

This collection covers a wide range of topics and periods of time. It has particular strengths in the areas of 20th and 21st century electoral material. It includes significant collections relating to, for example, governors-general; the first federal election in 1901; and female parliamentarians including former Senators Jocelyn Newman and Christine Milne. Significant objects in this category include a broadside informing Australians of compulsory voter registration; memento fragments of the Berlin Wall; and the ceremonial civil uniform worn by Sir Edmund Barton as a Privy Councillor.

Category 2 – Prime Ministers

A collection that documents the lives and careers of Australia's prime ministers. This category includes material culture:

- once owned by or created by Australia's prime ministers;
- associated with the lives and careers of Australia's prime ministers; and
- created in response to Australia's prime ministers.

The development of this collection complements existing collections at other museums relating to individual Australian prime ministers. MoAD's collection has particular strengths in aspects of the life of Robert Menzies, acquired through a generous donation from the Menzies family. It also includes significant material relating to Sir Edmund Barton, Joseph Lyons, Sir Earle Page, John McEwen, Bob Hawke, John Howard, Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott. Objects in category 2 include a COVID-19 vaccine vial that contained the dose given to the Prime Minister Scott Morrison in 2021; a silver platter depicting penguins, acquired by Bob Hawke and reflecting his commitment to protecting the Antarctic environment; and a portrait by William Dargie of Robert Menzies wearing his Order of the Thistle regalia. The collection also holds numerous satirical depictions and other creative responses to Australian prime ministers.

Category 3 – Political influencers and movements

A collection documenting the impacts of influential individuals, organisations and political movements in Australia's democratic history. This category includes material culture encompassing:

- The impact of:
 - leaders of political parties and movements;
 - influential parliamentarians;
 - individuals and organisations who have played a key role in significant political moments; and

- prominent political commentators, journalists and lobbyists.
- The purpose and activities of:
 - political parties with a national presence or influence;
 - counter-movements or responses to political movements; and
 - community groups motivated by a desire to bring about change.

Election campaign material from the 20th and 21st century features strongly in this collection. It also contains objects relating to influential parliamentarians including Neville Bonner, Arthur Calwell, Sir James Killen, Christine Milne, Tim Fischer and Doug Anthony. Significant objects in category 3 include a boomerang-shaped petition in support of Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians; placards from the School Strike 4 Climate movement; a pair of red satin shoes worn by Julie Bishop at her final conference as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade; and a rainbow flag signed by the eight senators who co-sponsored the legislation that legalised same-sex marriage.

Category 4 – Old Parliament House

A collection documenting the design, construction, iconography and history of Old Parliament House. This category includes material culture encompassing:

- the construction and physical changes to the building, architectural features and fittings;
- furniture and items used in the building;
- objects associated with the people who worked in the building and their duties;
- the social significance imbued in the place; and
- the lived experience of the museum

Old Parliament House is the strongest object in this collection, together with the extensive and significant collection of bespoke furniture that has remained in the building for which it was designed. Significant objects in category 4 include the Speaker’s Chair in the House of Representatives Chamber and the President’s Chair in the Senate Chamber, both international gifts presented to Australia to mark the opening of Parliament House. This category additionally features a substantial collection of telephonic equipment from Old Parliament House donated by Neil Baker, a former in-house Telecom technician. Oral histories of other people who worked in the building, either as members of parliament or support staff, also form a substantial collection in category 4.

4. Evaluation and Review

The Collection Development Plan is implemented in accordance with MoAD’s five-year collection development priorities. Acquisitions are reported against the collecting areas, and an assessment made to determine their contribution to the collection vision and statement of significance consistent with the MoAD Strategic Plan. The Collection Development Plan will be reviewed in 2026 in line with the Strategic Plan 2018-2023.