

**WAIPA DISTRICT MUSEUMS COLLECTION POLICY**  
**TE AWAMUTU MUSEUM**  
**March 2009**

**Te Awamutu Museum Trust Board Objectives:**

*To actively promote awareness of and access to the rich cultural heritage, both Maori and Pakeha of this area and to assist in the promotion of local historical initiatives.*

*To actively encourage children and school groups to make use of the resources at the Museum and to increase educational resources at the Museum.*

*To increase the collections (archives, artefacts and photographs) of the Museum concerning the history of Waipa District and beyond, and to ensure the preservation and storage of these collections using correct conservation materials.*

**1. Purpose of collection policy:** To provide a framework within which Cambridge Museum and Te Awamutu Museum accession, collect, preserve and document material that engages people in the unique cultural, historical, environmental and recreational heritage of the Waipa district, and to maximise opportunities for access.

**2. Objectives:**

**2.1** To refine accessioned collections and the information we hold about them on an ongoing basis so they best meet the long term needs of local communities.

**2.2** To maximise public access to accessioned collections through databases, research, exhibitions, public programmes, education programmes and outgoing loans.

**2.3** To practice the best use of resources including storage space, personnel and funding, in order to achieve balanced benefit to different communities of interest.

**3. Roles in respect of collections:** Legal ownership of accessioned collections is vested in Te Awamutu Museum Trust Board (in the case of Te Awamutu Museum) and the Cambridge Historical Society Inc (in the case of Cambridge Museum). Administration of the Museums is the responsibility of Waipa District Council who employ a Museums & Heritage Manager to manage Museums' operations, and professional staff with training in collection management to directly care for and provide access to collections.

**4. Legal & ethical frameworks:** All Museum activities are carried out within appropriate legislative frameworks, especially the Antiquities Act (1975), Privacy Act (1993), Copyright Act (1994), Protected Objects Act (2006), Arms Regulations (1992) and their amendments. All Museum activities are further guided by the Museums Aotearoa *Code of Ethics for governing bodies of museums and museum staff* (Appendix A), the *Code of Ethics for the Archives & Records Association of New Zealand* (Appendix B), the *Access to Information Statement of the Library and Information Association of New Zealand* (Appendix C) and the *Waipa District Council Museums Weapons Policy*. The following principles are highlighted and/or added:

**4.1 Acquisition:** The Museums undertake a thorough and stringent acquisition process, including determining the right of the potential donor/seller to dispose of the item, investigation of provenance, and full documentation.

**4.2 Deaccessioning and disposal:** because of prevailing assumptions that donated items will be held in collections in perpetuity, care is taken to inform all potential donors of the possibility of future de-accessioning. In the event an item is de-accessioned, preference is given to offering the item back to its original donor although no assurance of this is given. In the event of sale of the item, any money received is held in a dedicated collections development account, which is only used to cover costs of deaccessioning and to purchase new items for collections.

**4.3: Blanket exceptions:** The Museums do not collect human remains, live specimens or live ammunition.

**4.4 Conflicts of interest:** Waipa DC Museum managers, staff and board/committee members involved in collecting within the same areas as the Museums do not use their museum affiliation to promote their personal collecting practices. No staff or board member may buy, trade or receive into their personal ownership a collection item that is being de-accessioned. No staff or board member may compete with the Museums in the purchase of a collection item.

**4.5 Consultation :** The Museums engage on an ongoing basis with community sectors connected with collections through donation or cultural association.

**4.6 Scholarship:** The Museums strive for sound scholarship and appropriate frameworks of understanding in the documentation and representation of all collections.

**4.7 Valuations:** Staff do not provide estimated valuations of material except when a professional opinion is required for insurance purposes and the item is part of the museum collection.

**5. Type of collections:** Accessioned collections are made up of items that have been formally accepted and assigned a unique accession number within the Museums' database. They include objects and taonga, archaeological material, archives, sound recordings, pamphlets, books, bound volumes, photographs and digital files. In addition, both Museums hold non-accessioned research and teaching collections, to which this policy does not apply.

**6. Acquisition methods:** The Museums gain possession of items in different ways:

**6.1 Donation:** They receive unconditional gifts with full transfer of copyright or an agreement to share copyright.

**6.2 Bequest:** They are offered bequests.

**6.3 Transfer** from other museum collections.

**6.4 Assignment** by the Ministry of Culture & Heritage under the terms of the Antiquities Act (1975) and the Protected Objects Act (2006).

**6.5 Purchase** when funds are available.

**7. Scope of collections:** The Museums collect material of high significance to present and past cultural, environmental and recreational life in the eastern and western parts of the Waipa district respectively. Within this broad scope, Museums prioritise new acquisitions and review existing collections to best serve their mission and the objectives of this collection policy within available resourcing. The following criteria govern collection development (see Appendix D):

**7.1 Title:** The Museums verify that the right to dispose of material rests with the potential donor/seller before proceeding with acquisition procedure. This includes ensuring that all family members and/or communities with shared interests in the material have been consulted.

**7.2 Copyright** and restrictions on access: restricted rights/access may be requested by potential donors or dictated by legislation such as the Copyright Act (1994). Museums require a transfer or sharing of copyright on material being offered to archive or photographic collections. Museums avoid acquiring material with access restrictions unless it has exceptional significance. Museums commit to document and honour any restrictions that were undertaken at the time of acquisition.

**7.3 Significance:** in this instance, 'significance' describes the historic, social, aesthetic and scientific values that material has for past, present and future generations in the Waipa district. The Museums carry out thorough assessment of potential and existing collection items to evaluate significance of collections.

**7.4 Condition:** All potential acquisitions are assessed before being brought into the museum to safeguard existing collections against pests, mould or pollutants. The Museums give priority to accessioning material in stable and sound condition unless exceptional significance outweighs this principle and resources are/will be available to conserve and stabilise it.

**7.5 Duplication:** new acquisitions are considered within the context of present holdings of similar material. In cases of duplication, priority is given to material with better documentation and provenance.

**7.6 Capacity:** new acquisitions are considered within the context of the Museums' capacity to store, conserve and provide access to them.

**8. Accessioning & deaccessioning:** The Museums undertake a formal procedure in order to bring material into their accessioned collections or remove material from accessioned collections. Material is assessed and documented before it is brought into the Museums by collection management staff who prepare an acquisition proposal that includes independent recommendations of two staff members.

Proposals are then presented through Waipa District Council's Museums & Heritage Manager to a meeting of the relevant governing body who have the final right of acceptance. Stringent principles apply to de-accessioning:

**8.1 Reasons for de-accessioning:** De-accessioning becomes necessary when material no longer meets the needs of the collection, or when it is lost, stolen or its status changes (for example a collection item is found to be a long-term loan).

**8.2 Title:** Particular care is taken to establish that the ownership of any material being considered for de-accession indeed rests with the Museums.

**8.2 Procedure & documentation:** The de-accessioning procedure investigates not only whether but how to re-assign material from the collection. All instances are carefully documented so the Museums retain a summary of why and how each item is de-accessioned.

**8.3 Consultation:** is carried out with any living donors who can be located and/or communities of interest (see 4.5) Any restrictions concerning disposal are respected.

**8.4 Disposition method:** consideration is given to a range of options, in the following order of preference:

**8.4.1 Reassignment to a non-accessioned collection** within the Museum. Formerly accessioned items may have particular use in Education or Research collections with less restricted terms of access.

**8.4.2 Return** to living donor, descendants or community of interest.

**8.4.3 Gift, trade or sale** to another heritage institution or party who is not an officer or employee of the Museums.

**8.4.4 Disposal by burial** may be requested by iwi or other community of interest; alternatively staff may recommend destruction in cases of extreme deterioration.

**9. Loans:** No loan agreement is undertaken for a term longer than 5 years, in order to preserve institutional memory. In the event a loan is required for longer, it is renegotiated at the end of that time.

**9.1 Long-term loans** were accepted historically as a means of developing collections. The Museums now undertake ongoing effort to identify and restore to their legal owner any items held in collection stores whose ownership has not been legally transferred to the museum.

**9.2 Loan Agreements:** Each new loan is covered by a loan agreement that may be drawn up by either lender or borrower (although the borrower has precedence in setting the terms of the agreement and drafting the document). A signed copy of the agreement is held by each party. Any changes negotiated during the term of the loan (e.g. early/partial return) are noted and initialled by lender and borrower on both copies.

**9.3 Incoming loans** are an operational activity administered by Waipa District Council for the purpose of exhibitions (see Exhibitions Policy). Museums accept financial liability for borrowed items in event of damage or loss, from the time of uplifting from lender until return to lender. Incoming loan agreements are signed off by Senior Curator in cases when valuation is less

that \$1000, and Museums & Heritage Manager when valuation exceeds \$1000.

**9.4 Exceptional loans:** in the event that an item of exceptional significance is offered to the Museums for ongoing storage and possible use, a custodial loan may be considered subject to the item being insured by its legal owners and maintained in condition appropriate for exhibiting. Exceptional loans are subject to sign-off by Waipa District Council Museums and Heritage Manager.

**9.5 Outgoing loans** are administered by the governing body who owns the collection and are signed off by them. Living donors or donor groups are consulted before loan is agreed to, and recommendations are submitted to governing body by collection management staff. Insurance must be put in place by the borrower, and in the event the replacement valuation of an item borrowed exceeds \$1000, proof of that coverage requested before the loan is dispatched.

**10. Care of collections:** Systems are maintained to ensure optimal physical preservation of collections.

**10.1 Staff responsibilities:** Professional staff trained in collection management directly care for collections, provide access and supervise all volunteers or other staff who work with collections.

**10.2 Access and security:** Collections are held in designated areas with locks or restricted accessibility. Keys are held by collection management staff who facilitate all routine access. In the event non-routine (emergency) access is necessary and collection management staff are not available, access is gained through Museums & Heritage Manager who notifies collection management staff within 24 hours. An emergency is defined as an event requiring attendance of emergency services, in particular Fire Services, Civil Defence officers or Police. In these circumstances, access is governed by the Collection Policy Disaster Plan (Appendix E)

**10.3 Exhibitions and outgoing loans:** Collection items are exhibited within the Museums and lent to other museums (for outgoing loans see section 9). Accurate records are maintained of terms of loans and changes in location.

**10.4 Documentation:** Te Awamutu and Cambridge Museums establish and maintain systems of documentation of the accessioned collections. The purpose of documentation is to identify collection items, to maintain accurate locations, to track changes in condition, and plan appropriate courses of action. Hardcopy formats of these records are retained in secure locations and an electronic database is administered through Vernon's Collection Management System. All electronic records are systematically backed up on the Waipa District Council network server and via ongoing digitised record management projects.

**10.5 Preventive conservation:** Preventive conservation describes activities carried out by Collection management staff to ensure the optimal physical preservation of the collections.

**10.5.1** Collection management staff **monitor** temperature, humidity and light levels, pest activity, disruption of amenities and disaster warnings.

**10.5.2** Collection management staff, within available resources, **control** environmental factors through the maintenance of heat pumps, dehumidifiers, heaters, calibration of thermo-hygrographs, fumigation and treatment of pests and the review and implementation of disaster plans

**10.5.3** Collection management staff carry out **best possible practice** within the constraints of budget for packaging, transportation, conservation treatments and safe storage.

**10.5.4** The Museums contract external professionals for support and services in areas that fall outside the expertise of collection management staff, such as pest eradication and remedial conservation treatments.

**10.5.5** Collections are handled in line with best practice as set out by National Services Te Paerangi guidelines.

**10.5.6** A framework is implemented which identifies and periodically reviews potential risks to collections (Appendix E).

**10.5.7** The Museums develop detailed collection disaster plans that align with the broader Museums & Heritage Business Continuance Plan. Collection management staff maintain and periodically review the collection disaster plans that are put in place to mitigate risks identified in section 10.5.6. These plans enable optimal disaster preparedness (Appendix E), disaster response (Appendix E) and disaster recovery (Appendix E).

**11. Access and use of collections:** The Museums' staff facilitate direct and indirect access to accessioned collections.

11.1 Direct access to collection material is provided and supervised by professional staff with training in collection management, and within the constraints of security, collection care, health & safety, donor restrictions and cultural protocols.

11.2 The Museums refine and record information about collections on an ongoing basis to enhance value and relevance of collections to communities. Access is given to this information through research files, finding aids, duplicates, display and publication within the constraints of copyright, access restrictions and cultural protocols.

11.3 The Museums establish, publicise and adhere to terms of access to collections. Scheduled charges are established by Waipa District Council but may be varied at the discretion of Museums and Heritage Manager.

**12. Iwi protocols:** The Museums engage with iwi/hapu/whanau to determine best practice in all activities relating to taonga. Consultation is carried out with appointed representatives including the Iwi Consultative Committee of Waipa District Council

**13. Glossary:** For the purpose of this Policy, “Museums” refers to Te Awamutu Museum and Cambridge Museum. “Taonga” refers to items of Maori ancestral significance with known provenance and/or which continue to hold ancestral value.

**14. Signoff and review:** Policy and reviews are signed off by Waipa District Council, Cambridge Historical Society and Te Awamutu Museum Trust Board. Reviews are conducted every three years.

Waipa District Council: ..... date: .....

Te Awamutu Museum Trust Board : ..... date: .....