

Appendix 3

Standards for Presentation of Finds and Documentary Evidence

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that staff and external parties are clear about the processes involved in preparing archaeological finds and accompanying documentary evidence before inclusion in the Queensland Museum Collection.

2.0 SCOPE

This procedure applies to the Curatorial and Collection Management staff of the Cultures and Histories Program, staff of the Conservation Department, external archaeologists and excavation Site Managers.

It applies to archaeological material in the following categories:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material
2. Australian but non-Aboriginal and non-Torres Strait Islander material
3. Material associated with Shipwrecks
4. World Collections (non-Australian material)

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Ancestral remains refers to skeletal remains, soft tissue or hair samples of deceased Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders. It also includes any plaster casts of Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders remains.

Accessioned Items are Objects or Specimens or Specimen Lots that have been incorporated into the State Collection through the formal process of Registration (numbering), and Accessioning (recording locality and other contextual information in an electronic database).

An **archaeological specimen** is a product of manufacture, alteration or use that may have been modified by or deposited due to human activities. It is primarily of value for its prehistoric, historic, cultural or scientific significance, and discovered on or beneath land or submerged or partially submerged beneath the surface of any water course or permanent body of water. Such objects may derive from Indigenous, historical, maritime, prehistoric or classical contexts, including stone, plant, faunal, ceramic, glass, metal, charcoal, sedimentological or other materials.

Burial goods refers to items found with Ancestral Remains such as bark coffins and other objects.

A **Collection item** is an Object or Specimen and associated data that has been formally acquired by QM.

Documentation is supporting evidence, recorded in a permanent manner using a variety of media (paper, photographic, electronic etc.), of the identification, condition, history, or significance of an Object, Specimen, or collection. This encompasses information that is inherent to the individual Object/Specimen and its associations in its environment as well as that which reflects processes and transactions affecting the Object/Specimen (e.g. Accessioning, documenting, loaning, analysis, treatment, etc.). Documentation is an integral aspect of the use, management and preservation of an Object, Specimen or collections.

An **Item** is an interchangeable term used for an Object, record, Specimen or Specimen lot.

Lot is the term used to define a group of Specimens or Objects recovered from the same location at the same time, which are registered, accessioned, stored and documented together for efficiency reasons based on manageable quantities of Objects (e.g. multiple specimens of insects, fishes, small crustaceans).

An **Object** is a human-made item, often manufactured or created from naturally-occurring materials and made for use in a cultural context. This term differentiates human-made collection items from those acquired in nature (Specimens).

QMN means the Queensland Museum Network

QMATSICC is the Queensland Museum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee, a group of community representatives which has the responsibility of advising the QM Board of issues, and to consult with communities.

Secret Sacred objects are objects with intrinsic cultural significance to Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islanders. This material is traditionally subject to restrictions and/or protocols regarding access and use.

A **site** is a discrete geographical location from which a group of artefacts has been collected using a rigorous methodology enabling the context of the artefacts to be reconstructed and researched.

State Collection is the official collection of Items registered by QM through Acquisition or Transfer. It is the sum total of all Accessioned items of scientific or historical significance vested in the Board of QM.

4.0 ACTIONS

4.1 Numbering

The **QE Register** is used for Queensland archaeological collections acquired under non-scientific or non-research circumstances. Within each collection, stone tools and retouched material must be individually numbered or sub numbered and described. Waste material

must be given a number and block of sub numbers. These should be counted, weighed and block registered, although only a proportion of these need to have the number written on them (approx. 10%).

For example, a miscellaneous collection of stone artefacts from one site previously deposited by a farmer in the Brisbane River Valley would be organised and numbered in the following way:

QE 11020/1 = 1 Bondi Point
 /2 = 1 Bondi Point
 QE 11021 = 1 edge ground axe
 QE 11022/1 = 1 retouched flake
 /2 = 1 retouched flake
 /3 = 1 retouched flake
 QE 11023/1-123 = 123 waste flakes

The **S Register** is designed to cater for surface or excavation collections made under scientific conditions for research purposes. Researchers hoping to deposit their material at the Queensland Museum should contact the Museum well in advance of commencing a project in order to obtain an ‘S’ number. This number then becomes the *Queensland Museum Site Number* and must be used throughout the project to identify all documents (reports, maps, drawings, photographs etc.) and objects (including bags, boxes and containers) associated with the specific archaeological investigation.

Within each collection, items must have one identifying number. Items of the same type (whatever the researcher may choose) from the same location within the site are assigned the same number, called a *unit number*. The unit number is unique to a unit. Each item must have a *unique sub number* within each unit number – creating a three tiered registration number. For example, an excavation is made of site S101. In one square in the first spit 10 tula adze flakes are found. In the next spit 15 waste flakes, 1 edge ground axe, 1 grindstone and 3 pirri points are recorded. The objects should be numbered and the information recorded as follows:

Number: S101	Description:	Data:	Recorder / date:
1/1-10	Ten tula adzes	Square A7 spit 1 Box 1A1	J. Bloggs 12/08/1981
2/1-15	Fifteen waste flakes	Square A7 spit 2 Box 1A2	J. Bloggs 12/08/1981
3/1	One edge ground axe	Square A7 spit 2 Box 1A3	J. Bloggs 12/08/1981
4/1	One grindstone	Square A7 spit 2 Box 1A4	J. Bloggs 12/08/1981

5/1-3	Three pirri points	Square A7 spit 2 Box 1A5	J. Bloggs 12/08/1981
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The information has been shown recorded on a *data sheet*, which should be used for recording all the archaeological finds at the site and should be provided to the Museum at the end of the project. (If a researcher uses his/her own numbering system for artefacts, these numbers must be listed in the description column of the data sheet for cross referencing.) In addition, each unit of material must also have a storage location (box number) recorded on the sheet in the data column.

The data sheets should also have a cover sheet as set out below:

Collection Data Cover Sheet		
Locality:	Museum Site No: S	
Map Reference:	Official site no:	
Local and/or Aboriginal name:		
Status of land:	Date(s) of investigation:	Investigators:
Supporting institution:		
Description of site:	Plan of site:	
	Publications:	

4.2 Marking

All finds should be physically marked with the *Queensland Museum Site Number*, the *unit number* and the *unique sub number*, unless they are of a fragile nature such as those with highly friable or rough surfaces or corroded ferrous items.

Any mark made on an object must be:

- **Secure** (it should not be possible to accidentally remove a mark)
- **Reversible** (it should be possible to intentionally remove a mark)
- **Safe for the object** (neither the materials nor the method used to apply it should put the object at risk)
- **Discreet but visible** (the position of the mark must not obscure detail on the object or spoil its appearance for display, but should be visible without undue handling)
- **Safe for staff** (the materials used to apply the mark should be safe for the person applying it)

A standard method for applying a mark requires a layer of Paraloid B72 to be applied to the object and the number written in black ink (water resistant made from a lightfast pigment). If the object is very dark in colour, white ink (water resistant made from a lightfast pigment) can be used instead. A top coat of Paraloid B72 should then be applied to ensure longevity of the number. Writing should be small, neat and legible. If objects are too small to be numbered they should be bagged and labelled accordingly.

The following considerations should be borne in mind when determining an appropriate location for applying a mark:

- Avoid physically unstable or friable surfaces
- Avoid decorated, painted, pigmented, varnished or waxed areas or areas that may be important for research purposes
- Choose a position that is not likely to be visible if the object is placed on display
- Avoid areas where the mark is at risk from abrasion from packing or handling
- Mark all detachable parts of an object
- As far as possible standardise the positioning of marks on similar objects

If in doubt about how to mark or label an object consult the Museum's Conservation section for advice.

4.3 Packaging and labelling

All finds should be handled, transported and stored to ensure the least risk of damage, deterioration or contamination. Boxes should be secured and padded inside vehicles during transit, and all precautions should be taken to reduce the risk of fire, moisture, movement and theft.

Hard or robust items should be wrapped in acid free tissue followed by a wrap of Tyvek, held in place with cotton tape.

Fragile items should be packed as above with the addition of extra padding within the boxes, such as bubble wrap, wadding or plastazote to prevent movement.

Small items should be individually wrapped in plastic bags and packed in small boxes with padding, not placed together with large or heavy items.

Woven objects, fibre, leaves and other very brittle material should not be wrapped, but should be placed flat (unfolded if possible) in ziplock plastic bags on a layer of tissue in a padded box. Keep layers to a minimum and place crumpled tissue on top of the upmost bag to minimise movement of the material.

Small stone fragments, flakes and friable material such as soil and charcoal should be stored dry in ziplock plastic bags.

Waterlogged items should not be dried out but should be immersed in water containing Panacide (1ml per litre) prior to wet storage in double sealed plastic bags. Boxes containing such material should be marked accordingly.

4.3.1 Bagging

Small items should be bagged according to material and unit number, using at least 200 gauge zip lock polythene bags with 3 white, write on panels (top panel for the number, middle panel for the material type / description, bottom panel for the context). Bags should not be over filled. Bags containing metal finds should be perforated (such as with a 'pricking wheel' available from haberdashery stores) to prevent build-up of harmful microclimates, so long as this will not lead to loss of sediments.

4.3.2 Boxing

The S Register material is stored at the Museum in cardboard boxes on compactus shelving using a series of different sized modular boxes which can all fit within a singular large box:

Size 1 - 90mm L x 70mm H x 65mm deep (x 32)

Size 2 - 110mm L x 70mm H x 130mm deep (x 8)

Size 3 - 220mm L x 150mm H x 300mm deep (x 2)

Size 4 - 460mm L x 150mm H x 310mm deep (x 1)

Material being prepared for deposition should be boxed using the same sized boxes where possible, to ensure standardisation with the existing collection. Boxes should be archival quality, heavy duty cardboard and when filled should not exceed 10kgs in weight per large box.

All boxes used to house and store items should also be marked with the site name, a list of contents (including their three tiered numbers) and context, using a permanent, water resistant, lightfast pigment marker.

Each box should also be numbered consecutively, and the final large box should have a standard label attached to one of the ends, with the following information as shown below:

Site no: S		Site name:		Dates:		Investigators:		Box no.	
		Permit no:							
Site field no:		Locality		Zone				Dest.	
Excavation / Surface Collection				Excavation / coll unit no:		F P TH PHO			
No.	Ex/Coll Unit No.	Components	No / Wt.						

Site no: S Queensland Museum Site Number (assigned by the Museum)

Site name: The name of the site

Permit no: Cultural Heritage Management Plan permit number

Site field no: Field number given to the site by the researcher

Locality: The area where the site is located

Zone: The regional area of the site according to administrative map divisions (assigned by the Museum)

Dates: Dates the field work took place

Investigators: The names of the principle investigators of the site

Box no. The number of the large box

Dest. The location of the box within the storage system (assigned by the Museum)

Excavation / Surface Collection Cross out the inappropriate option

Excavation / coll unit no: The collection unit (square spit etc.) from which the material in the box originated

F P TH PHO Tick if any of these related documentary support materials are included with the deposition (e.g. Field notes, Publications, Thesis)

No. The box number of each of the boxes within the large box

Ex/Coll Unit No.	The excavation or collection unit of the material in the box
Components:	Brief description of what is in the box
No / Wt.	Number and/or weight of the material in the box

4.3.3 Outsize objects

Some objects may be too large for standard packaging, such as large timbers or stone carvings. These should be wrapped in Tyvek and have an individual Tyvek label attached marked with the object number.

Large objects such as grindstones should be wrapped in acid free tissue and padded with bubble wrap or wadding and placed inside plastic drain pipes or cardboard tubes, which should be 5-10cm longer than the longest object. The ends can be padded and taped over to prevent objects from sliding out. The tube should be marked with the site name, a list of contents (including their three tiered numbers) and context, using a permanent, water resistant, lightfast pigment marker.

If in doubt about how to pack an object consult the Museum's Conservation section for advice.

4.4 Documentary archive

The documentary archive consists of all material associated with the project, excluding the objects themselves. It can include the site archive (field notes, photographs, excavation recording forms), the post excavation assessment (excel spreadsheets of specimens, destructive testing results, radiocarbon determinations) and original material produced as part of the final report; covering all media from hand written diaries, computer generated documents, drawings and plans, photographs and other digital media. There should be a comprehensive index of all the records making up the archive and each different section of the archive should be numbered separately and consecutively in pencil in the top right hand corner (if the documents are computer generated the number should be printed).

All documentation must be presented in a manner and in media that promote their long term preservation. In particular the following guidelines must be followed:

- Metal fastenings should not be used (e.g. staples, paper clips etc.), instead plastic alternatives must be used.
- Elastic bands should not be used on rolled materials; instead white cotton tape must be used.
- Every separate paper must be marked with the site number
- Papers should not be presented in ring binders, box files or ordinary office stationary. Where possible they should be stored flat and unfolded in archival quality boxes, inside low acidity folders or envelopes. (These should be marked with site number and box contents and should be numbered consecutively.)

4.4.1 Drawings and plans

Drawings must be on polyester based film of a regular size (no smaller than A4 or larger than A0). They must identify the subject, include a scale and where appropriate, a means of orientation (e.g. compass rose). Any necessary key or colour coding must be marked on the drawing.

4.4.2 Photographs

Digital images should only be used as supplementary images on site with the main archival photographic records being prepared using traditional film.

Photographs should be stored in archival polypropylene sleeves and carry the three tiered identification number (and publication reference numbers where applicable) on the reverse, marked in soft 2B pencil. Negative holders rather than the negatives should be marked.

Slide mounts should be marked with the site number and a running number, which should include the total number e.g. 1/54, 2/54 etc.

Digital images should only be in either TIF or JPEG format and supplied on a high quality CD or DVD in individual 'jewel' cases, the discs and case to be marked with the site number using a water based marker pen.

4.4.3 Other digital media

Digital media is rapidly becoming the preferred option for the production and storage of many elements of the documentary archive; but submission of a fully digital archive is not acceptable. However, providing security copies of archives in digital format is acceptable. The Museum therefore expects to receive digital copies of the following items in addition to the paper copies:

- Photographic catalogue
- Digital photographs
- Object catalogue
- Specialist reports
- Final report
- Index of archive content.

All computer records should be IBM PC compatible, and text files should be presented in Microsoft WORD. Details of the hardware and software used to generate the record should also be included. (For more specific up to date information regarding formats and operating systems please contact the Museum's Archaeology Curator.)

If in doubt about the most appropriate materials, method of preparation or specific formats to use, the depositor should seek clarification directly from the Museum, either from the Conservation section or the Curatorial staff.

4.5 Responsibilities

Responsible officers:

- Collection Managers
- Curator of Archaeology
- Conservation staff
- Program Head
- External parties wishing to deposit material at QM

5.0 POLICY BASE

This procedure has been developed in accordance with the principles of the *Queensland Museum Collection Policy*.

6.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENT
1.0	June 2015	Original document circulated for comment
1.1	December 2015	Comments from Archaeology Curators incorporated

7.0 AUTHORISATION

Approved by:	Prof. Suzanne Miller
Title:	CEO, QMN
Signature:	
Approval date:	11 th January 2016

8.0 MORE INFORMATION

Policy owner/creator:	Head, Collection Services
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9.0 REVIEW PROCESS (When will this procedure change?)

This document will be reviewed every 2 years and at other times if any significant new information or legislative or organisational change warrants a change to this document.

Once printed this document is no longer a controlled document.