

## **QMN PROCEDURE: Procedure for Deposition of Archaeology Collections (Cultures & Histories Program)**

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### **1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that staff and external parties are clear about the process involved in depositing archaeology collections at the QMN, ensuring that material is:

- stored in containers of a standard size and quality with consistent labelling,
- lodged with sufficient information to provide value to users of the collection, and
- are deposited with documentary evidence that is as far as possible produced by the person who collected the material.

### **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.

This procedure outlines the steps involved in archaeology material being deposited in the QMN Collection. It must be read in conjunction with Policy *QM311 Deposition of Archaeology Collections*.

It applies to archaeological material in the following categories:

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

### **3.0 DEFINITIONS**

**Ancestral remains** refer 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.

**Cultural material** is physical and documentary material that represents the intangible and tangible elements of individual cultures. Such material may be, may refer to, may represent or may be a component of specific practices or knowledge systems. It includes but is not limited to artistic works including visual, performing and literary works, moveable cultural property, Ancestral Remains and other sensitive materials, photographic, film, and sound recordings and all forms of documentation which include any elements of culture - past, present and future.

**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 use, management and preservation of an Object, Specimen or collection. All digital and paper based documentation must be collected, maintained and stored in accordance with *QM318: Collection and Research Record Keeping Policy*.

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 Peoples and/or Torres Strait Islanders. This material is traditionally subject to restrictions and/or protocols regarding interpretation, storage, 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.

**Specimen** means any animal or plant, or any part, product, egg, seed, or root of any animal or plant or geological sample.

**State Collection** is the official collection of Items registered by QMN 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 Notification of fieldwork

As soon as appropriate government, legislative and community permission has been given for an archaeological excavation to proceed, and it is believed that the material must be deposited with the Queensland Museum, it is the Site Managers responsibility to contact the Museum as soon as possible and lodge a *Notification of Fieldwork* form (*Appendix 1*), prior to the commencement of works. This will enable the Museum to estimate the space and facilities required to potentially house the material generated by the project.

(It must be noted, that completion and acceptance of the form in no way guarantees that QMN will accept custody of any or all of the material described in the form. A further application must be made before the Museum is able to make a final decision with regard to deposition – see section 4.2 below.)

The Curator must then sign and complete the bottom half of the form issuing a *Site Accession Number*; keeping a hard copy for filing, scanning an electronic copy for storage in the Collection Records repository and sending a copy to the Site Manager for their records.

From that point on the *Site Accession Number* must be used as the prime method of site identification by both the Curator and Site Manager in any subsequent reports, correspondence and in relation to numbering the material excavated.

In addition the Curator must supply the Site Manager with a copy of the *Standards for Presentation of Finds and Documentary Evidence* (*Appendix 3*). This outlines the Museum's prescribed marking, labelling, packing and formatting requirements for any archaeological material being considered for deposition. The purpose is to ensure that the material can be quickly and effectively incorporated into the Museum's Collection and ensure efficient access to the material for researchers as soon as possible after lodgement. If material is not presented for deposition in accordance with these standards it may not be considered for deposition. Or alternatively a fee may be charged to cover the purchase of

the appropriate archival materials and to cover the cost of converting proposed material into the acceptable formats prior to acceptance.

## **4.2 Application to Deposit**

The depositor (whether a prior *Notification of fieldwork* form has been completed or not) is required to complete and submit an *Application to Deposit Archaeological Material (Appendix 2)* to the Curator of Archaeology, supplying as much information as possible and attaching any requested supporting information. (At this stage no material must be brought in to the Museum.)

The Curator will review the completed application form, and may decide to:

- request additional information or copies of documentation from the depositor,
- decline to accept the material and inform the depositor of the decision,
- request an opportunity to view the material where it is currently located in order for further assessment to be made.

Based on the application, if the Curator decides to proceed with the process for accepting the material, they must request that the depositor follow the Museum's prescribed preparation requirements (if they haven't done so already) as outlined in *Standards for Presentation of Finds and Documentary Evidence (Appendix 3)*; before it can be considered for further assessment.

At this point, the Curator must complete an *Acquisition Proposal Form* within the Vernon Collection Management System (CMS) (as outlined in document *QM45*), proposing the material for 'acquisition' into the collection and seeking the approval of the Program Head to proceed. If approval is given, the Curator can proceed with final assessment of the material.

## **4.3 Final Assessment**

The Curator will arrange directly with the depositor for the archaeological material and all accompanying information to be brought into the Museum. The Curator will need to complete an *Object Receipt* (selecting 'other' as the purpose and writing "Possible archaeological deposition" as the reason); a copy being given to the depositor, the original being retained by the Museum.

The Curator will then conduct a final assessment of the archaeological material and associated information to ensure it meets the conditions of the deposition, specifically how it has been prepared and the level of documentation. If the Curator is satisfied the material meets the Museums requirements, the deposition will proceed.

At this point the depositor will be required to complete a *Transfer of Title / Custodianship Agreement (Appendix 4)*, legally transferring ownership or custodianship of the material to the Queensland Museum; depending on which arrangement is deemed the most appropriate by the Museum based on the type of items, the circumstances of collection and the role of the depositor. In each case, the Queensland Museum representative must seek

from the depositor copies of documentation confirming that the depositor has been given permission and approval to act on behalf of the custodians prior to signing the agreement. All associated documentation must be scanned and attached to the relevant record in Vernon (where one exists) and hard copies must be kept in the appropriate file located in the Collections and Research Records area (whether that is the designated CRRC located in the QM&S Library or a campus / Collection specific repository) in accordance with *QM319 Collections and Research Record Keeping Procedure*.

In addition the depositor will also be required to complete a *Copyright Assignment (Appendix 5)* granting full licence to the Queensland Museum to research, study, display, publish and provide public access to all the documentary information contained in the collection. (QMN will agree to acknowledge the originators of the information in any utilisation of the material.)

The collection material must then be formally accessioned into the Vernon CMS and stored appropriately. All documentation must be scanned and attached to the relevant record in Vernon (where one exists) and hard copies must be kept in the appropriate file located in the Collections and Research Records area (whether that is the designated CRRC located in the QM&S Library or a campus / Collection specific repository) in accordance with *QM319 Collections and Research Record Keeping Procedure*.

#### 4.5 Responsibilities

Responsible officers:

- Collection Managers
- Curator of Archaeology
- Conservation staff
- Program Head

#### 5.0 POLICY BASE

This procedure has been developed in accordance with the principles of the *QM78 QMN Collection Policy*.

#### 6.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENT
1.0	June 2015	Original document circulated for comment
1.1	November 2015	Comments from Archeology Curators included.

#### 7.0 AUTHORISATION

<b>Approved by:</b>	Prof. Suzanne Miller
<b>Title:</b>	CEO, QMN
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Approval date:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2016

## 8.0 MORE INFORMATION

<b>Policy owner/creator:</b>	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.*