

BASS STRAIT MARITIME CENTRE
COLLECTION POLICY

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Bass Strait Maritime Centre

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre's collection is a source of knowledge, ideas, stories and memories. It is a repository developed as a resource to inspire and educate the community and visitors. A key focus of the collection is to contribute to the interpretation and preservation of the history and maritime heritage of the Devonport region and its connection with the Bass Strait.

2. HISTORY OF THE BASS STRAIT MARITIME CENTRE

Following the opening of an exhibition of maritime memorabilia by Dame Enid Lyons at the Little Gallery in Steele Street, Devonport on 27th October 1970, a committee of enthusiasts was formed to work towards the establishment of a maritime museum in Devonport, to be known as the Tasmanian Maritime & Folk Museum.

The nucleus of the present collection was brought together and initially exhibited in an old weatherboard house at 26 Esplanade, East Devonport. The Tasmanian Maritime & Folk Museum was officially opened by the Premier, Mr Eric Reece on the 18th July 1973 with limited opening hours. Security of the collection was a major problem and for a period of time the collection became unavailable to the public.

In 1980 the Harbour Master's residence at 6 Gloucester Avenue, Devonport became available and was taken over by the Tasmanian Maritime & Folk Museum Society. Following some structural changes it became the repository for the growing collection and opened to the public in 1981.

The museum underwent a name change in 1995, becoming the Devonport Maritime Museum. With Devonport City Council assistance, an extension was added to the southern end of the building and officially opened by the Mayor of Devonport, Alderman Geoff Squibb on 23 February 1997. With a total of 370 square metres of floor space, the exhibits, particularly the ship models, could be better displayed and the Naval Room was established. During this year the Signal Station and Mast were renovated and relocated to the grounds of the Museum. Following the expansion of the Museum a local history collection comprising a history library, data files, paintings, scrap books, maps, the Richmond Printers Collection, and several photograph collections was made available by the Devon Historical Society. The delegated History Room provided a base for publishing projects which the Society had commenced. The Devonport Maritime Museum and the Devon Historical Society Inc. amalgamated in 1999. This resulted in more funds being made available to progress the work of the joint body and bring more members and volunteers to the Museum.

The additional resources allowed the Museum to open to the public on a daily basis. By 2008 it was recognised that the task of operating the Museum had become too onerous for the members and in February 2009, steps were taken to approach the Devonport City Council to discuss the long term future of the Museum. The Maritime Museum Strategic Working Group was formed and plans were undertaken to lead the Council to

take over the responsibility for the running of the Museum.

The Devonport Maritime Museum and Historical Society Inc. was disbanded at the Annual General meeting held on 9 August 2010 and ownership of the collection was passed to the Devonport City Council.

The Devonport City Council appointed the Devonport Maritime & Heritage Authority to oversee the governance of the facility. The Museum closed in February 2012 for extensive redevelopment to be reopened in February 2013 rebranded as the Bass Strait Maritime Centre.

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION POLICY

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre Collection Policy is the guiding document for the development and management of the collection with the following objectives:

- To guide the selection of material to be included in the Collection
- To document the history and purpose of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre
- To build a historical resource for the community
- To develop the Collection as an educational resource
- To interpret the history and development of the district

4. WHAT THE BASS STRAIT MARITIME CENTRE WILL COLLECT

Our state is an island because of the notorious stretch of water known as the Bass Strait. The story of Devonport is entwined with the story of the Bass Strait and at times our port city has played a central role in Tasmania's maritime history. The Bass Strait Maritime Centre Collection and exhibitions reflect that connection with the following themes:

Local history – The story of Torquay and Formby, two towns amalgamating to become Devonport in 1890; from the pioneers such as the Cocker, Fenton, Holyman and Henry families and their influence on the emergence of Devonport as the key port on the North West coast in the early 1900s to modern day Devonport.

Maritime History - Devonport's apogee as a maritime centre was between 1880 and 1930, at the time when steamships were replacing sailing ships. Devonport's shipbuilders were building the largest steamships in the state. Pioneers such as the Wood, Holyman, Griffiths and Burgess families shaped the foundations of Devonport's rich maritime heritage.

Bass Strait Transport – From sail to steam, from steam to the roll on/roll off ferries and the evolution of cargo handling to our current shipping container - the simple and ubiquitous invention that transformed ports and the way cargo is handled. The shift from a mere journey across the Strait for the passenger to the age of elegant travel via ship and air travel was the result of vision and investment by the Holyman family – second generation shipbuilders and owners from Devonport.

Bass Strait Fishing – The ketch, *Julie Burgess*, is an integral part of the operations of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre. The Centre showcases the history of the newly refurbished vessel and its history as a cray-fishing ketch working Bass Strait from 1938 to the 1980s. The

fishing industry and its border tensions, early and current fishing practices and innovations contribute to the Bass Strait stories.

Communication – From the Signal Station and Mast in the grounds of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre to the bells, semaphore, Morse code, Aldis lamps and other maritime navigational aids, the collection highlights the advances in technology from flags to current electronic systems.

Shipwrecks – The formal European history of the Bass Strait began with the wreck of the *Sydney Cove*, a ship laden with rum bound for Sydney. Matthew Flinders' first journey into the area was aboard one of the salvage vessels. The wrecks increased as European activity increased and as Melbourne boomed. The Devonport built *SS Orion*, the largest steamship built in Tasmania and the flagship of the famous Holyman line simply disappeared without trace in 1908. Artefacts from the Collection tell the story of the "Ships Graveyard" in the Bass Strait.

Naval History – The story of local hero Teddy Sheean, a farm labourer from Latrobe who served on the *HMAS Armidale*, is the focal point for the naval stories and memorabilia exhibited.

Geographic region/Historic period

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre artefacts, stories and research materials for the geographic region bound by the township of Don in the West to Port Sorell in the East and Latrobe in the South, range from the early 1800s to the current day. Devonport and the Bass Strait are integral to the Collection.

Physical Items to be collected include:

Three dimensional artefacts, documents, maps, printed matter, books, photographic material, publications, diaries, oral histories, business records, personal papers, letters, drawings, sketches, textiles or general ephemera and memorabilia relating in any way to the Bass Strait maritime history or local history of the Devonport region as defined, or to persons, groups, or businesses involved in the history of the local area. This also includes any material pertaining to the provision of facilities such as wharves, buildings, dredges, breakwaters, custom services, passenger and trans Mersey ferries, public or private buildings, or any other trade, business or calling which had or has a close relationship to the history of the Devonport area.

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre has an extensive local history and maritime library and accepts donations of books relating to the established themes and in adherence with the Acquisition criteria.

Priorities

Determined priorities are relative to gaps identified in the current collection through long term and temporary exhibition planning.

5. HOW THE BASS STRAIT MARITIME CENTRE WILL COLLECT

5.1 METHOD OF ACQUISITION

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre shall acquire objects for the permanent collection by donation, bequest, purchase or transfer. To minimise operational restrictive practices, the

Bass Strait Maritime Centre will not accept conditional donations unless under special circumstances or in the case of a temporary exhibition. The object would be returned immediately after the exhibition concludes. All acceptances are at the discretion of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre Co-ordinator taking into account the circumstances of the donation and consistency with the Acquisition criteria set out in the Collection Policy.

5.2 ACQUISITION COMMITTEE

The Centre Coordinator has the discretion to accept/refuse donations within the parameters set by the Collection Policy on behalf of the Devonport Maritime & Heritage Authority. A list of new acquisitions is provided to the Devonport Maritime & Heritage Authority in the monthly Operations Report.

5.3 ACQUISITION CRITERIA

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre will consider the following criteria before approving acquisition of an object:

- **Relevance**
The Bass Strait Maritime Centre only collects objects that relate to the Centre's Statement of Purpose and key collecting areas
- **Significance**
Priority is given to objects which are significant for their historic, aesthetic, scientific/research or social/spiritual value
- **Provenance and Documentation**
Priority will be given to objects where the history of the object is known and associated documentation and support material can be provided
- **Condition, Intactness, Integrity**
The condition of the object must be taken into consideration when acquiring material. Badly damaged material will not normally be accepted into the collection
- **Interpretive Potential**
Objects that tell a story that adds to the interpretation of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre themes will be prioritised
- **Rarity**
Objects may be prioritised if they are rare examples of a particular kind of object
- **Representativeness**
Objects may be prioritised if they are an excellent representative example of a particular kind of object
- **Duplications**
Objects that duplicate items already in the collection will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition and/or historic value. In such a case the duplicate may be considered for de-accessioning
- **Legal Requirements**

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre only accepts objects where the donor/vendor has legal title to the object

At the discretion of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre the area of interest may be extended further afield as required, particularly when items being considered may complement an already owned item or exhibit, or add to the information file pertaining thereto.

6. COLLECTION CARE: DOCUMENTATION, CONSERVATION & STORAGE

6.1 DOCUMENTATION & RECORD KEEPING

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre aims at all times to maintain an effective documentation system. Donor forms, receipts, registers, and catalogue information will be kept at the Bass Strait Maritime Centre.

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre will follow the guidelines below when acquiring material:

1. Owner or agent brings the object to the Bass Strait Maritime Centre.
2. A receipt is issued to the owner recording the object name, address of the owner and contact number and date. The same information is written on a tag and attached to the object.
3. This records that the Bass Strait Maritime Centre is holding the object and does not mean or imply the object has been accepted as part of the permanent collection.
4. Notes on the history and associations of the object will be taken, for the Bass Strait Maritime Centre Coordinator to consider when assessing the object.
5. The Bass Strait Maritime Centre Coordinator assesses the donation for inclusion in the Bass Strait Maritime Centre collection. The decision is documented.
6. Refused objects are returned to the owner with an explanatory letter. If the object is not claimed within 90 days it will become the property of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre and may be disposed of.
7. If the object is accepted donors sign two copies of the Donor form, one for the Bass Strait Maritime Centre and one to keep. A letter of thanks is sent to the donor.
8. The object must be registered, numbered and catalogued. Where documentation relating to the significance of the object is available, an object file will be kept.
9. The object and object number is listed under the name of the donor in the of donor book/files.
10. The object must be photographed and its condition recorded and entered into the catalogue.

11. The storage or display location of all objects must be recorded, along with any subsequent object movements.
12. The acquisition is listed in the monthly Operations Report

6.2 STORAGE & CONSERVATION

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre aims to achieve high standards of collection care and storage

- Acquisition will be dependent on exhibition potential and the capacity of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre to handle, display or appropriately store items.
- Storage areas must remain clean, secure and sealed against the weather.
- Temperature and relative humidity should be kept as stable as possible
- Access to storage areas is to be controlled.
- Ultra-violet light should be excluded from storage areas. When storage areas are not in use lights must be turned off.
- Archival quality storage materials should be used for all significant material.
- Storage areas must be regularly checked for pests and other problems.
- Objects are not to be stored on the floor
- Untrained personnel should never attempt to clean, treat or restore museum objects.

7. DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

7.1 CRITERIA FOR DEACCESSIONING

An object can be de-accessioned from the Bass Strait Maritime Centre's collection if

- It does not comply with the current collection policy of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre
- It is damaged beyond repair
- The conservation and storage costs for it are beyond the means of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre

- It is a lesser quality duplicate of an object the Bass Strait Maritime Centre already owns
- It lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the collection
- A substantiated request for the return of the object to its original owner/donor is received. This could be the return of sacred material to Indigenous peoples.

7.2 DEACCESSION PROCEDURES

- The object identified for removal from the collection must be assessed by the Centre Co-ordinator with close reference to the criteria stated above.
- The object identified for de-accession must be held for a twelve month "cooling off" period before it is finally disposed of.
- Staffs, volunteers, committee members and their families are prohibited from purchasing, or otherwise obtaining, a de-accessioned object.
- Any funds acquired from the sale of the de-accessioned item should be used for acquisitions or care of the collection.

7.3 DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

In priority order the object must be:

1. Returned to the donor or family. If after a thorough search this is impossible, the object should be;
2. Transferred to another appropriate institution
3. Sold by public auction, where appropriate
4. Used as an educative/interpretive tool
5. Destroyed or recycled if appropriate

8.0 LOANS

8.1 LOAN PROCEDURES

- Permanent and long term loans will not be accepted by the Bass Strait Maritime Centre.

- The Bass Strait Maritime Centre will lend and borrow material to help meet its purpose for temporary exhibition, public and education programs.
- The Bass Strait Maritime Centre holds separate forms for inward and outward loans.
- The maximum loan period is 12 months.

8.2 INWARD LOANS

- Inward loans shall only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research and for fixed periods of time.
- Inward loans shall be recorded in a separate Loans Register
- A representative of both the Bass Strait Maritime Centre and the lender will be required to sign an agreed inward loan form. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan.
- The Bass Strait Maritime Centre agrees to exercise the same care with respect to loans as it does for its own collection
- Loans shall remain in the possession of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre for the time specified on the form.
- The Bass Strait Maritime Centre can request to renew loans if required. Documentation recording renewal must be signed by the Centre Coordinator or delegate and the lender.
- The Bass Strait Maritime Centre will not act as a repository for private loan collections. Permanent loans will not be considered.
- A sample inward loan form is attached

8.3 OUTWARD LOANS

- The Bass Strait Maritime Centre will lend objects to other museums and organisations holding collections. It will not lend to private collectors.
- Borrowers and a representative from the Centre will be required to sign two outward loan agreement forms. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record condition of the loan and the period of the loan.
- The borrower must exercise care in the handling, storage and display of the loan object and must be prepared to meet the conditions outlined in the outward loan agreement.
- The borrower will provide a secure display and/or storage area.
- The maximum loan period is 12 months. Applications for extension of this period must be made prior to the loan expiry date.

- Objects cannot be treated or altered in any way without the written permission of the Bass Strait Maritime Centre.
- Loans will remain in the possession of the borrower until returned to the Bass Strait Maritime Centre.

A sample outward loan form is attached

9.0 ORAL HISTORY POLICY

- An Oral History Agreement is signed by the person interviewed, which clearly states the purpose and intended uses of the interviews and what copyright provisions apply.
- The Bass Strait Maritime Centre abides by the Guidelines of Ethical Practice of the Oral History Association of Australia.

10.0 ACCESS

The Collection is accessible to the public through regular opening hours and by appointment. The collection records are accessible for research purposes by appointment.

11.0 REVIEW YOUR COLLECTION POLICY

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre will review its Collection Policy every three years.

12.0 DATE OF ENDORSEMENT

The Bass Strait Maritime Centre Collection policy was endorsed by the Devonport Maritime & Heritage Authority on xx xx 2012 Signed.....Chairman