Australian Museum
Protocols for the Deposition of Archaeological Materials

V1.0 January 2012
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General procedure – stages of deposition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging requirements</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of deposition fees</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further information</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to Deposit Archaeological Materials at the Australian Museum (Form A)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Museum Archaeological Deposition Form – Box Contents (Form B)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow chart – deposition process for archaeological material</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These protocols are governed by, and should be read in conjunction with, the *Australian Museum Archaeological Collection Deposition Policy*
Introduction

The following protocols apply to all Indigenous archaeological materials collected and/or excavated under the auspices of NSW government permits and consents, and which are intended to be deposited at the Australian Museum. Their purpose is to ensure that all archaeological materials stored at the Museum:

- are stored in containers of standard size and quality, with a consistent standard of labelling,
- are lodged with sufficient documentary evidence to enable ready access for management purposes and ensure they remain of continuing value to users of the collection, and
- are deposited with documentation that is, as far as possible, produced by the archaeologists or cultural heritage practitioners that created the collection.

By establishing a set of set of deposition fees, these protocols are also intended to ensure that some of the costs associated with registration and the long term care and management of these materials is borne by depositors. The protocols are governed by, and should be read in conjunction with, the Australian Museum Archaeological Collection Deposition Policy.

General Procedure – Stages for collection deposition

As a general principal, the Museum encourages archaeologists contemplating the possible deposition of material at the Australian Museum to consider these guidelines as early as possible when designing their research/salvage methodology. The Museum makes no guarantee that it will accept any archaeological material offered to it and retains the right to refuse any archaeological material offered for its collections1. The Australian Museum requires the deposition of archaeological materials to be undertaken in four separate stages:

1. **Initial Application**

Having held appropriate consultations with Aboriginal community members and other stakeholders over options for long term storage of the collection, depositors are required to fill out and submit an Application to Deposit Archaeological Materials (Form A), and attach any requested documentation.

2. **Desktop review**

Following receipt of a completed Application to Deposit Archaeological Materials, the Museum will carry out a desktop review of its capacity to accept the collection and the value of the material in question. Depending on the outcome of the review, the Museum may request additional information, refuse to accept the material or request for the Collections Officer to inspect the material where it is being held. Once the initial review process is complete, the Museum may choose to request that the archaeological material be transferred to the Museum for a final assessment. No archaeological materials should be transported to the Museum until the desktop review is completed. Under no circumstances will the Museum accept either permanent or temporary custody of archaeological remains without written authorisation from the delegate of the Australian Museum Director.

3. **Final assessment**

Depending on the result of the desktop review, the Museum will provisionally accept custody of the archaeological material subject to the completion of a final assessment. In addition to the material itself,

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1 Note that a condition on an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) regarding deposition of Aboriginal Objects with the Australian Museum does not guarantee acceptance of the objects by the Australian Museum.
copies of all remaining documentation relevant to the excavation and/or collection of the materials are to be submitted at this time. The final assessment will include:

- Confirmation of the value assessment and descriptive information in the Application to Deposit Archaeological Material,
- Verification that all relevant documentation has been provided. Such documentation must include, but is not necessarily limited to, excavation field notes, section drawings, site plans, photographs, catalogues of cultural materials retrieved and materials being deposited and published and unpublished reports (where applicable).
- Verification that the material has been packaged and labelled in accordance with the packaging protocols below, and
- Payment of any applicable deposition fees.

Depending on the outcome of the final assessment, the material will either be registered, returned to the depositor (at the depositor’s expense) or the Museum may ask the depositor to lodge additional documentation or to carry out additional work on the material (for example repackage the material if it is not packaged correctly).

4. Registration

Once the Museum is satisfied that all deposition conditions have been met the material will be registered (assigned a unique identification number in the collection database) and transferred into one of the permanent collection stores. The depositor and the Office of Environment and Heritage will be notified in writing that the Museum has formally accepted custody of the archaeological material.

Note that the Museum will normally require at least three months to complete the desktop review and final assessment (Stages 2 and 3).

**Packaging requirements**

All materials are to be deposited in archival standard cardboard (fibreboard) boxes of a size and quality specified by the Museum. The sizes of the boxes are as follows:

- Large (Category A) 300 x 200 x 150 mm
- Small (Category B) 170 x 120 x 50 mm.

All archaeological materials are to be packed within Category A boxes where possible, with the smaller boxes used to “nest” inside them as appropriate. The Collections Officer will provide advice on alternative box sizes where archaeological materials will not fit within the prescribed categories. The Museum can provide contact details for suitable commercial suppliers of packaging materials. **Note that the weight of an individual box, including the specimens and other packaging materials contained within them, should not exceed 5kg under any circumstances.**

The contents of each box are to be clearly noted. Museum staff will complete the label that will be placed on the outside of each box, but the depositor should include full details of the contents of each box on the Archaeological Deposition Form – Box Contents (Form B), a copy of which should be placed within the appropriate box.

Where assemblages have been categorised into different types, classes, taxa, etc, during analyses, the materials should remain bagged according to such criteria. Plastic bags (>40 um gauge) should be used; paper bags are not acceptable. Each bag should be clearly labelled with its contents as well as the provenance, that is, site name, site code, square/trench number, spit/excavation unit. It is also useful to include the name of the excavator/project director, as well as the date of the excavation. Any other information that will ensure that a bag and its contents can be returned to its correct storage location, if
it is left outside the storage box for any reason, should also be included. The plastic bags should be securely sealed. If self-sealing bags are not used, bags should be stapled or secured tightly with ties, so that the contents will not fall out.

Labels with details about provenance, contents, etc., are to be firmly attached to, or included inside, the plastic bag. Such information should not be written only on the plastic bag. If the label is to be included inside the bag, it should be of such a material or packed in such a way (e.g., double-bagged) that it does not (a) contaminate artefacts which may have residues adhering, (b) damage artefacts with use-wear, or (c) damage or contribute to further fragmentation of faunal remains or other fragile remains. As a minimum labels should be durable cardboard (e.g., acid free, Tyvek labels). Paper labels are not acceptable.

**Schedule of deposition fees**

Table 1. Standard deposition fees for archaeological materials, Australian Museum (as at January 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time payable</th>
<th>Refundable?</th>
<th>GST inclusive amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application processing fee</td>
<td>On submission of Application to Deposit Archaeological Materials (Form A)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>$110.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodgement fee (per site)</td>
<td>Prior to completion of the final review</td>
<td>Refundable if the material is not accepted into the collections</td>
<td>$2,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage fee (per Category A standard sized box, or other separate boxes as appropriate)</td>
<td>Prior to completion of the final review</td>
<td>Refundable if the material is not accepted into the collections</td>
<td>$220.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any costs directly associated with the preparation and transportation of material to the Museum including packing materials, freight and insurance, are expected to be met by the depositor. Archaeological projects completed before 31 December 2011, or projects completed as part of a program of research or postgraduate study, may be eligible for a reduced fee structure (contact the Collection Officer Indigenous Archaeology for further details). It is anticipated that deposition fees will be subject to CPI equivalent increases into the future.

**Further information**

For further information regarding the lodgement of archaeological collections at the Australian Museum contact:

Collections Officer, Indigenous Archaeology
Australian Museum
6 College Street
Sydney NSW 2010
Phone: (02) 93206209
APPLICATION TO DEPOSIT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIALS
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

This form is to be completed when seeking to lodge archaeological materials in the Australian Museum in accordance with the Archaeological Collection Lodgement Policy. A separate form should be completed for each archaeological site. The Australian Museum may choose not to accept custody of any or all of the archaeological materials described in this form.

SITE DETAILS (Should be consistent with the AHIP where applicable)

Site name: ________________________________________________________________

NPWS Site No (AHIMS Site ID): ____________________________________________

Geographic location: ______________________________________________________

Easting: __________ Northing: __________ (Coordinates must be in GDA (MGA))

Latitude: __________ Longitude: __________

Map sheet: ______________________________________________________________

DETAILS OF DEPOSITOR (Should be consistent with the AHIP where applicable)

Name of applicant: ________________________________________________________

Institution/organisation: __________________________________________________

Postal Address: __________________________________________________________

Phone contact: _______________ Email: ____________________________

Current location of archaeological materials: ____________________________________

PROJECT DETAILS

Name of project (Use the AHIP project name if applicable): _________________

____________________________________________________

Date of fieldwork: ________________________________

Name and contact details of AHIP holder (if different from depositor): ______________

____________________________________________________

INDIGENOUS CONSENT FOR POSSIBLE LODGEMENT AT THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Evidence of consent from the relevant Indigenous representative(s) for deposition of archaeological materials in the Australian Museum must be attached.

Name(s) and contact details of Registered Aboriginal Parties (as identified through the consultation process for an AHIP under the National Parks and Wildlife Act regulations):

____________________________________________________________________

If no Registered Aboriginal Parties, name(s) and contact details of other relevant Aboriginal representatives:

____________________________________________________________________
### SITE IMPACT APPROVAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSW Government authorisation (select one)</th>
<th>Reference numbers and dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ AHIP (Impacts to this site were authorised under an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit)</td>
<td>AHIP Number:______________ Date Issued/Signed:__________ AHIMS permit ID number:__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The impacts to the site were undertaken for the purposes of complying environmental assessment requirements issued by the Department of Planning</td>
<td>Major Project Number:__________ Date environmental assessment requirements issued:__________ Or Date of project approval:__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ The impacts to this site were authorised by a project approval under the <em>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Other (Describe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE FOR SUBMISSION

(State yes/no and provide comments as relevant. Hard copies of primary records such as field notes and photographs should be submitted in hard copy if possible, other documents preferably in digital form).

Field notes:__________________________________________________________
Site plans:__________________________________________________________
Section drawings:______________________________________________________
Photographs:_________________________________________________________
Artefact catalogues:___________________________________________________
Faunal material catalogue:______________________________________________
Conservation and lab analysis documentation:_____________________________
Office of Environment and Heritage Aboriginal Site Impact Recording Forme:________________________
Report/s (include AHIMS Report registration number if relevant):__________

______________________________________________________________________
Details of published documents (please submit copies in digital form):_______
______________________________________________________________________
Other documentation:__________________________________________________

### DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL REQUESTED TO BE LODGED AT THE MUSEUM

Original archaeological context (include comments on any known disturbance to the site prior to collection):
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Sampling Methodology (include comments on discard and recovery bias as applicable):
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

7
Types and quantity of archaeological materials to be deposited (attach schedule if required):

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Total volume of archaeological material (include number of standard A sized boxes):

________________________________________________________________________________________

Total weight of archaeological material (kg): ________________

DESCRIPTION OF SURPLUS MATERIAL/MATERIAL TO BE STORED ELSEWHERE

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

STATEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

You must address one or more criteria as set out in Section 3 of the Australian Museum Archaeological Collection Deposition Policy (attach text if necessary). Where social or cultural value to the Aboriginal community (Criterion 1) has been documented as the result of an AHIP consultation, then extracts from the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report can be used by the applicant to support their deposition application to the Australian Museum. Applicants addressing Criteria 2 and/or 3 are encouraged to discuss their statement with the Australian Museum’s Collections Officer, Indigenous Archaeology, before completing this form.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

OTHER COMMENTS (including any conservation requirements or issues of confidentiality or cultural sensitivity relating to the information contained in this application): __________________________________________
DECLARATION
The archaeological materials described in this application have been collected in accordance with relevant Federal and State heritage legislation, and in accordance with all relevant NSW Government permit conditions. I understand that the Australian Museum may choose not to accept custody of the archaeological materials described in this application, and that lodgement fees will apply if the material is accepted by the Australian Museum. I understand that, except where specific cultural sensitivities are known to exist and have been described above, the information contained within this application, and the archaeological material referred to in this application, can be made available to persons accessing the Australian Museum collections.

Signature of depositor: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Return to:
Collections Officer, Indigenous Archaeology
Australian Museum
6 College Street
Sydney NSW 2001

Office Use Only
Date received:_________________________ Desktop review completed:_____________________
Acquisitions meeting date:________________ Final assessment completed:____________________
Application fee paid:____________________ Invoice No:_________________________
Lodgement fee paid:____________________ Invoice No:_________________________
Storage fee paid:____________________ Invoice No:_________________________
Date of written notification, desktop review:_________________________________________________
Date of written notification, final assessment:_______________________________________________
AM Registration number:_______________________________________________________________
Box reference/Code number(s):_________________________________________________________
Storage Location(s):_______________________________________________________________
FORM B
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITION FORM– BOX CONTENTS
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Note: A box contents form (Form B) is to be completed for every separate box of archaeological material lodged with the Australian Museum. This form should only be completed after the Museum’s initial desktop assessment is completed, and written approval has been provided for the material to be transported to the Australian Museum.

INFORMATION ON CONTENTS OF BOX

Site name:______________________________

NPWS Site No (AHIMS Site ID):______________________________

Site Registration No*:______________________ Box No:_________ Shelf location*_________

Site name(s) and locality:__________________________________________________________

Project Name:_______________________________________________________________

Code name/no for site:_________________________________________________________

Name of depositor:_____________________________________________________________

Excavation/collection unit(s):_____________________________________________________

Description of Material e.g. Artefact type(s), material type, number of items within box (if appropriate)

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

Weight of box, including specimens (note 10 kg total weight limit):_____________________

* Leave blank; to be completed by Museum staff.

INFORMATION ON CONTENTS OF BOX

Site name:______________________________

NPWS Site No (AHIMS Site ID):______________________________

Site Registration No*:______________________ Box No:_________ Shelf location*_________

Site name(s) and locality:__________________________________________________________

Project Name:_______________________________________________________________

Code name/no for site:_________________________________________________________

Name of depositor:_____________________________________________________________

Excavation/collection unit(s):_____________________________________________________

Description of Material e.g. Artefact type(s), material type, number of items within box (if appropriate)

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

Weight of box, including specimens (note 10 kg total weight limit):_____________________

* Leave blank; to be completed by Museum staff.
Flow chart – deposition process for archaeological material

(Stage 1)

Hold negotiations with Aboriginal representatives. Seek authorisation to collect/excavate under relevant NSW legislation. Identify alternative lodgement options to the Australian Museum in case it does not accept the material on significance and/or capacity grounds.

Completion of archaeological excavation/collection and documentation

Application to Deposit Archaeological Materials (Form A) lodged, (non-refundable) application fee paid

Not accepted

Desktop review of application – assess the Museum’s capacity to hold the material and the collection’s significance.

Issue provisional invitation to lodge material at the Museum subject to completion of final assessment

Package and label material in accordance with Museum protocols (Form B). Pay deposition fees and transport material to the Australian Museum.

Provisional acceptance

Fine assessment. Confirmation of significance assessment, verification of documentation and packaging standards.

Not accepted

Final assessment. Confirmation of significance assessment, verification of documentation and packaging standards.

Return material to applicant. Refund deposition fees less any transport costs.

Discuss alternative options with OEH and seek an AHIP variation if necessary.

Final acceptance

Register and transfer material to permanent collection store. Notify applicant of acceptance of material.

Museum responsibility

Applicant responsibility

- Registrant and transfer material to permanent collection store. Notify applicant of acceptance of material.

The Museum will not accept custody of any archaeological remains without prior written authorisation under any circumstances. It may choose to accept custody of material on a provisional basis following completion of the desktop review.

Until the Museum provides written advice that the final assessment has been completed to a satisfactory standard, it reserves the right to return any archaeological material offered up for its custody.