FIRST NATIONS PROTOCOLS FOR ENGAGING WITH AM CULTURAL COLLECTIONS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Australian Museum acknowledges:

- The traditional custodians of the land and waterways on which the Museum and its collections are located, the Gadigal and the Dharug People. We pay respect to the Elders who walked before us, who walk beside and who will walk with us tomorrow. We recognise that our institutions hold the heritage of Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Pacific Islander peoples.

- Our cultural collections are our living, breathing ancestral creators – they embody our spiritual core, our cultural memory, and our inspiration for our current and future generations.

- The recognition of the moral, intellectual and cultural rights of First Peoples as owners of their cultural knowledge. We not that in this document, when the phrase “First Peoples” is used, it refers to Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and Pacific Islanders.

- The Cultural Protocol will recognise, protect, and promote our heritage and history of the cultures of our Indigenous communities, and will inspire integration and innovation in and with our communities for a shared future.

All individuals and organisations that interact with and provide services to the Australian Museum need to recognise that the museum holds cultural material and information connected to First Peoples. These Protocols are here to ensure that the ongoing collection of, provision of, and access to the Australian Museum spaces, material and information in physical and/or soft forms need to be performed in culturally sensitive, inclusive and appropriate manners.

RESPECTING CULTURAL RIGHTS

Australian Museum acknowledges the rights of Australian Museum First Peoples to their cultural heritage and knowledge including cultural heritage objects and documentation (photographs, film, sound recordings, manuscripts). For access to the cultural collection by the museum for its own operations, both Australian Museum staff and visitors are asked to adopt the cultural protocols laid out in this Induction Process

Requests to access, research, reproduce or publish Australian Museum First Peoples material by Australian Museum stakeholders, researchers and others: The requestor
will be expected to seek appropriate external cultural clearances, if necessary. Australian Museum will assist as and when necessary. Requestors are requested to appreciate the processes involved to meet the obligations to consult with Australian Museum First Peoples.

PRIORITIES FOR USE OF THE COLLECTION

1. The Cultural Collection aims to:

   - Ensure that our Collection content encourages everyone to value social memory and human creativity.
   - Help preserve the different perspectives of humanity through meticulous care and attention of the Collections.
   - Support the search for knowledge and insight through investigation of the Collection and share the insights gained through a variety of ways.
   - Build and strengthen accessibility to the Collection knowledge through inclusive and insightful ways for all.

2. These aims will be achieved when access to the Cultural Collection can:

   - Improve and advance accessibility to our collection and program content and activities through use of our new storage facility, and via digital, broadcast, publishing and touring to a variety of audience communities and researchers
   - Cultivate collection content that provides opportunity for audiences with different interests and needs.
   - Develop collection experiences that engage and interest audiences and proliferate use of our content.

3. The Cultural Collection Centre aims to offer access to its collections and services in a variety of ways across a range of platforms:

   - Permanent and temporary exhibitions.
   - Touring exhibition programs.
   - In-person visits to the collection for research purposes
   - Digital access to:
     a. Narrative content, including articles, audio and video.
     b. Catalogue search tools to find materials and objects from the collections.
     c. Digital images of books, manuscripts, artworks and archives
     d. Content that enhances a visit to an exhibition.
   - Other onsite engagement activities such as tours, discussions and object handling.
   - Youth engagement programs.
   - School engagement programs.
   - Community events and live programs.
• Broadcast collaborations.
• Social media platforms.
• Publications.
• Opportunities for undergraduate and graduate programs from diverse academic and practice-based disciplines to engage from time to time with Cultural Collections and related Australian Museum Divisions.
• Research support for cultural and creative producers from a wide range of backgrounds.

4. For use of cultural material, knowledge and information to be most meaningful, it will be important to observe and consider the following:

• Intended use and benefits should be in the best interests of both First Peoples and the Australian Museum.
• Any materials, knowledge and information that are culturally sensitive must be treated with due regard and respect, as indicated by the First Peoples’ team.
• The Australian Museum commits itself to seek whenever possible cultural clearance regarding the use (reproduction, display or publication) of cultural material, knowledge and information held in its Collection for the purposes of education, exhibition, and general information in the interests of the public.

SECRET, SACRED AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Secret and sacred material, knowledge and information

The Australian Museum respects that certain cultural material, knowledge and information in its cultural collections may be secret and/or sacred, or completely restricted in nature. Secret and/or sacred material, knowledge and information pertains to beliefs and practises such as ritual life, women’s or men’s secret societies relating to rituals, initiation and magic of a specific community. In specific instances access to and use of the material, knowledge and information may be, under customary law, granted to persons that have the privilege and/or right accorded by the relevant member of the Australian Museum First Peoples team and in some cases in consultation with communities or its representative with whom the cultural material, knowledge and information has been sourced.

The Australian Museum will ensure that suitable storage of secret and/or sacred material, knowledge and information is maintained and made available to those accorded the privilege by the Australian Museum. Access to these will be adhered to as required by the protocols integral to the secret and/or sacred material, knowledge and information.
IMPLEMENTATION OF CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

Implementation of the Cultural Protocols acknowledges the following:

1. Cultural Collection staff nominated by the Australian Museum will facilitate access to Cultural Collections and/or storage facilities. Any one that is without the privilege to access Cultural Collections, and wishes to, will need to follow established procedures to obtain the privilege. This includes other members of Museum staff, contractors, clients, communities', artists, students, cultural researchers and academics.

2. Upon entry to Cultural Collection an Acknowledgement of Country is recommended. All Museum staff can demonstrate leadership, reconciliatory processes and cultural capability, by performing an Acknowledgement of Country. This should be conducted with respect and honour. During more than one visit to the Collection areas in a day the same individual need not repeat the salutation for that day. Exceptions will be made for dignitary visits on the same day, in which case a separate Acknowledgement will be accorded.

3. It is important to observe physical and personal cultural safety prior to entering the Cultural Collection areas. The emotional and spiritual energy of the Cultural Collection areas cannot be underestimated and individuals will react differently in the storage facility, according to their feelings and/or beliefs. It is important to ensure the cultural safety of all who enter, with the appropriate behaviour to be observed and/or accorded in the Cultural Collection areas.

4. A maximum of 8 adults and children is recommended to be taken through Collection areas at any one time by at least 1 Australian Museum-sanctioned Guide. There can only be one group at a time on a tour in Collections. For both health and safety reasons this ratio must be observed wherever possible.

5. Bags and containers are not to be taken into the Collection areas. If visitors bring bags and containers these must be left in demarcated spaces prior to entry into Cultural Collection areas.

6. No food or drink is allowed in the Cultural Collection areas or in the demarcated space for bags and containers. Food and drink may be allowed in spaces outside the collection area, according to which storage facility is being visited. Please consult a Collection staff member for guidance. Smoking is never allowed in or around any collection area.

7. Children may be permitted entry but must be accompanied by a Working With Children Check (WWCC) certified supervisor or designated guardian and
monitored by those that have been given access privileges to Cultural Collections by Collection Managers.

8. Collection material is not to be touched, unless it is clearly indicated that this is part of the assigned task for a person working with the Collections. Those that would like to are required to participate in an induction process on the safe handling of cultural material that will be offered by the Australian Museum.

9. Photographs may be permitted by a relevant First Nations team member. If photographs are to be taken, an ICIP form will be made available and must be completed and signed prior to entry into Collection areas, or alternatively, prior to vacating the Cultural Collection.

10. The Australian Museum will ensure that all recognized safety procedures are considered in Cultural Collection areas. Prior to a tour in Cultural Collection areas, the Museum-sanctioned Guide will give a safety briefing. In the unlikely event that a member/s should feel unwell for any reason, they should notify the Guide and appropriate action will be taken.

11. When leaving the Cultural Collection areas, appropriate debriefing should occur, especially for our First Peoples’ guests or clients. All should feel a sense of closure; and, if appropriate, farewell the ‘objects’ and ancestors as a sign of respect.

12. In the unlikely event that someone in Collections area should feel unwell, for any reason, they should notify the Guide and appropriate action be taken.

13. Appropriate clothing must be worn, including appropriate footwear. High heels are not allowed. Sturdy covered shoes are recommended. Visitors wearing inappropriate or disrespectful clothing will not be permitted access to Cultural Collection areas.

14. The Museum acknowledges that cultural is imbued with information, knowledge and beliefs of First Peoples. This means that every item is a living, breathing extension of the people from whom this cultural material was sourced. The processes of viewing, touching, handling or moving of this cultural material needs to be done bearing this in mind.