

# NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

## EXHIBITIONS POLICY

### Introduction

To provide an innovative and high quality exhibitions program in support of the National Library of Australia's objectives.

### 1. Aims

Exhibitions in the Library's Exhibition Gallery and displays in the proposed Treasures Gallery aim to:

- 1.1 enhance access to the collections and services of the Library;
- 1.2 enhance understanding of Australian life and culture among Library visitors and users;
- 1.3 to attract new audiences to the Library through exhibitions which are supported by an appropriate range of public programs;
- 1.4 contribute to the public's awareness of the Library as a significant national cultural institution, and of Australian libraries as key gateways to information and ideas.

### 2. Objectives

- 2.1 stage up to four major exhibitions each year including incoming exhibitions;
- 2.2 develop productive relationships with other Libraries and key cultural organisations within Australia or overseas;
- 2.3 tour suitable exhibitions developed for the Gallery to venues, preferably libraries, around Australia or possibly overseas, (see Travelling Exhibitions Policy);
- 2.4 develop and maintain Treasures Gallery displays which focus on the Library's collections including recent acquisitions and possibly loans, where lead time, Library resources and display conditions permit;
- 2.5 where possible seek sponsorship, grants, and alternative funding in line with the Library's Sponsorship & Fundraising Policy to support exhibitions;

- 2.6 provide content and assist in the development of two major and two smaller on-line exhibitions in parallel with the exhibitions program each year (refer to Guidelines for the Consideration of Exhibition-related Publishing Proposals Draft, March 2002);
- 2.7 to aid in the development of the Library as a major tourist destination and to contribute to increased visitation.

### **3. Strategies**

- 3.1 develop a balanced program of exhibitions and displays considering available resources and maintaining this program over a three year cycle of exhibitions;
- 3.2 allow adequate lead time for the development of all exhibitions; a minimum of two years is desirable for major exhibitions and 12 months for minor exhibitions and Treasures Gallery displays;
- 3.3 program exhibitions to suit the Library's aims and resources. Ensure that the demands of other organisations or cultural agencies do not distort these objectives, which is to encourage access to collection material in a context generated by the Library;
- 3.4 incoming exhibitions must be of the same standard as Library exhibitions and relate to its collections and/or to Australian historical or cultural life;
- 3.5 regularly evaluate the effectiveness of exhibitions, for example through visitor surveys;
- 3.6 contract specialist curators, designers or other specialists to assist in the development of exhibitions as necessary;
- 3.7 enhance the ongoing development of in-house curatorial, registration and design skills through training and other professional development opportunities;
- 3.8 interpret exhibitions and displays for the visitor in ways which enhance the experience of attending Library exhibitions. This can be done through signs, captions, wall texts, room brochures, catalogues, guided tours, and other public programs such as audiotours, lectures, floor talks, audiovisual and music presentations;
- 3.9 ensure effective project and financial management of exhibitions, with regular reviews of progress against milestones and financial reports as necessary;
- 3.10 ensure effective forward planning and coordination of exhibitions and displays along with other public programs particularly publications, events, multimedia developments and communication and marketing activities;
- 3.11 develop and manage tours of Library exhibitions in accordance with the Travelling Exhibitions Policy (see Travelling Exhibitions Policy April 2002);

- 3.12 with Communications and Marketing Branch ensure that appropriate publicity and advertising is generated for each exhibition;
- 3.13 maintain display areas for Library collection materials at internationally-recognised standards for environmental control, lighting and security;
- 3.14 consult Collection Managers regarding the acquisition of material, if this material would be used for display in exhibitions;
- 3.15 accept incoming exhibitions or displays at short notice (under 12 months) only when they are considered to be of very clear benefit to the Library and that this action will not negatively influence other Public Programs or Library activities;
- 3.16 convene Exhibitions Committee meetings as necessary but at least three times per year to discuss the forward exhibition program, and any policy or other issues which may arise. Ensure that the Exhibitions Committee process enhances communication regarding exhibitions between Divisions in the Library;
- 3.17 adopt best-practice and benchmarking, in particular seeking to learn from the experience of other exhibitors in the Library sector, in Australia and overseas, as well as other exhibiting institutions.

## **Review**

Through the Library's Exhibitions Committee this policy will be reviewed annually or as required.

## **Conclusion**

These objectives reflect Government policy that cultural institutions should provide opportunities for Australians to reflect on their society and its history. The strategies developed by the Library to deliver exhibitions to the Australian people respond to Government emphasis on the needs of regional and remote communities, and on the use of digital technologies for delivery of services where appropriate. They also reflect the Library's aim to be the world's leading documentary resource for knowledge and understanding of Australia and Australians.