

Australian Museum Protocols for the Deposition of Archaeological Materials

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nature culture **discover**



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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,

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)

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

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

FORM A

**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		
	NSW Government authorisation (select one)	Reference numbers and dates
<input type="checkbox"/>	AHIP (Impacts to this site were authorised under an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit)	AHIP Number: _____ Date Issued/Signed: _____ AHIMS permit ID number: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	The impacts to the site were undertaken for the purposes of complying environmental assessment requirements issued by the Department of Planning	Major Project Number: _____ Date environmental assessment requirements issued : _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	The impacts to this site were authorised by a project approval under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act</i>	Or Date of project approval: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Describe)	

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 Form: _____

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):

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.

 Museum responsibility

 Applicant responsibility

Completion of archaeological excavation/collecton and documentation

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

(Stage 2)

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

Not accepted

Advise applicant material will not be accepted.

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

(Stage 3)

Provisional acceptance

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

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.

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

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.

(Stage 4)

Final acceptance

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

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.