

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

# ACCESS STRATEGY FOR THE PACIFIC COLLECTION



SEPTEMBER 2019

FINAL

**AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM**

1 William Street Sydney NSW 2010 Australia T 61 2 9320 6000 [australianmuseum.net.au](http://australianmuseum.net.au)





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Australian Museum acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and waterways on which the Pacific 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.

### **Introduction**

The Australian Museum's Pacific Collection represents the living cultures with thousands of artworks, cultural technologies and archaeological material from across Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. It is the largest Pacific Collection in Australia and one of the largest in the world with more than 45,000 objects at the Cultural Collection Centre – Annexe in Rydalmere. There are also two other sites: Castle Hill (Storage Facility – 14,500 objects), the Australian Museum (500 objects) Closed until August 2020).

This document serves to ensure that all organizations and individuals that require to access the Collection will be given due care and attention. There will also be a need for due diligence by visitors to treat the space and Collection with care and attention. This will also enable members of staff from the AM prepare and provide knowledge and information in relation to the Cultural Material.

The AM works closely with communities from across the Pacific region to maintain and interpret our Collections and promote greater understanding of Pacific cultures. This ensures our Collections maintain a vital connection with contemporary communities and living cultures. Repatriation is a common and welcome practice for the Museum back to Pacific nations.

Our Collections are also the foundation for wide-ranging research encompassing the material culture, history and archaeology of the Pacific. The Australian Museum is the custodian to over 21.9 million objects and specimens of cultural and scientific significance, of which the Pacific Collection is part.

The Pacific Collection is stored in various locations within the Sydney Metropolitan area including the Museum itself. Consultation with a Pacific Collection team member is essential when arranging for access, for both individuals and groups. Access to any Collections not on display in a public gallery is by appointment.

The location(s) of the Pacific Collections and numbers of items able to be viewed:

Cultural Collection Centre – Annexe in Rydalmere 45,000 objects.  
Castle Hill (Storage Facility) 14,500 objects  
Australian Museum (Closed until August 2020) 500 objects.



## Requests to Access Collections

Reasonable access will be provided to members of the Pacific community, researchers, the media and other interested parties on request. The Museum recognises that interest in the Pacific Collection is diverse and widespread and that there are many and varied parties interested in this Collection. This may include members of the AM Trust and members of staff, dignitaries and visitors from NSW State Departments, leaders from around the world, students from schools and universities, and visitors to the Collection. Access will thus be granted for a wide variety of purposes.

Collections can be viewed Mon-Fri 10am-3pm by appointment only.

Requests to access the Collection must be made in writing and sent to Pacific Collections Team,  
c/o Michael Mel, Collections Manager, [michael.mel@austrmus.gov.au](mailto:michael.mel@austrmus.gov.au)  
or posted to Australian Museum Pacific Collections Team, 1 William Street, Sydney NSW 2010 at least one week prior to the date required. If Michael Mel is unavailable, the request can be forwarded to Logan Metcalfe (phone: 9320 6295) or Yvonne Carrillo Huffman (Phone: 9320 6194) of the AM's Pacific Collections.

Requests must include the following information:

- Name
- Organisation
- Purpose of the visit
- Number of visitors
- Access requirements

The AM will reasonably accommodate all requests. Access requests, approvals and refusals will be recorded.

The Pacific Collection in AM reserves the right to refuse access to some parts of the Collection for cultural or other reasons including any unreasonable risk to the Collection. Instances of access refusal will clearly state reason for refusal, refusers identity and any intended review of application for subsequent access permission.

Any person(s) or group refused entry, if they wish, may lodge an appeal of the refusal. This must be done in writing, stating clearly the reasons for the appeal of the decision within five (5) working days of the decision to refuse access. This appeal can be lodged with the Australian Museum's Director of Engagement, Exhibitions & Cultural Connection. This subsequent decision will be final.

Parties requesting access to the Collections for research and publication purposes must first seek permission from the appropriate Pacific community in relation to each object.



## Access Requirements

All visitors must adhere to the Cultural & Induction protocols outlined in the *Indigenous Peoples' Protocols for Engaging with AM Cultural Collections*. These will be provided to visitors in advance of their first visit.

All WHS requirements will be explained and must be followed by visitors. Australian Museum Cultural Collection staff will always facilitate access to Cultural Collections and/or storage facilities.

A maximum of 8 adults and children is recommended to be taken through Collection areas at any one time by one Australian Museum staff. Larger groups can be accommodated with notice in advance and the availability of staff.

Access to the Collection in general is available for all approved visitors after they have completed the required protocols for entry to Collections. The AM, through Pacific Collection as custodian of Collections, is accorded permission to provide access to cultural objects and advocate for both the Communities and those that contributed to have the cultural objects as part of the Pacific Collection.

However, access to the Secret/Sacred Collection must be opened to visitors with the written or appropriate permission of the specific cultural community or those that have an immediate connection for its placement within the AM's Pacific Collection. It is the responsibility of the visitor to liaise with and obtain from the specific community permission to access the Secret/Sacred Collection [and the specific cultural object(s)].

Acknowledgement of Country and acknowledgment of Ancestors, as invoked in the *Indigenous Peoples' Protocols for Engaging with AM Cultural Collections* will be encouraged by visitors.

Respectful and appropriate behaviour around objects of cultural sensitivity is expected.

No food and beverage is allowed in the Collection area. There is never any smoking allowed in any Collection facilities.

Bags and containers are not to be taken into the Collection areas and must be left in a safe and demarcated area outside the area.

Photographing of the Collection is not permitted unless prior permission has been granted.

Touching or handling of objects is not permitted unless prior permission has been granted.

Other details that are part of the Cultural Protocols can be found in the *Indigenous Peoples' Protocols for Engaging with AM Cultural Collections*.