



New South Wales

Principles for
regional programs
by State
Government cultural
institutions

An initiative of the
NSW Arts Advisory Council

The Hon. Bob Carr, MP
Premier, Minister for the Arts
and Minister for Ethnic Affairs



Ministry for the Arts
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Introduction

The principles set out in this document are intended to guide the development of programs in regional New South Wales by the New South Wales Government's cultural institutions.

The principles have been endorsed by the Premier and Minister for the Arts as a high priority for the Government. They began as an initiative of the New South Wales Arts Advisory Council. A number of key commitments in the Government's *Cultural Development Policy* (March 1995) as well as recommendations in the *Review of Regional Arts Development in New South Wales* (Macdonnell Report, 1996) are embodied in the principles.

The aim of the New South Wales Government is to build enduring relationships between the Sydney-based institutions and museums, galleries, performing arts centres and other cultural organisations in regional New South Wales. The Government's cultural institutions are:

Archives Authority of New South Wales	State Library of New South Wales
Art Gallery of New South Wales	Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
The Australian Museum	Sydney Opera House
Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales	

While it is recognised that these institutions are already co-operating and working with regional, local and community organisations, the Government believes that it is imperative to move to an enhanced level of collaboration. The implementation of these principles will give a sharper focus and a greater impetus to the work of the cultural institutions in supporting communities and organisations in regional New South Wales.

The Arts Advisory Council has identified a number of areas where regional services might be improved, such as staff exchanges, skill sharing, collection surveys, travelling exhibitions and performances. Other opportunities will arise as the principles are adopted and implemented. It is intended that the regional services provided, or assisted, by the cultural institutions in accordance with these principles will complement, rather than duplicate, the work of organisations such as Museums Australia, the NSW Regional Galleries Association and Arts on Tour.

The Premier has commended these principles to the governing boards and trusts of the cultural institutions as a framework for planning and collaboration across the arts portfolio. The institutions will be expected to explore, as a matter of priority, ways in which they can be implemented. Ideally this will lead to the establishment of formal and informal partnerships between the institutions and selected regional organisations.

The principles recognise:

- the importance of local needs and interests;
 - the need to develop local skills and networks, as well as activities which reflect local history and culture;
 - the need for regions to develop their own cultural activities and infrastructure;
 - the need for compatibility of collection information;
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- the need to work collaboratively to conserve, document and interpret moveable heritage collections across New South Wales;
 - the importance of local cultural activity in attracting tourism and strengthening local economic development; and
 - the importance of retaining moveable heritage within the communities and regions from which it is derived.

Building on these principles will be a two-way process, benefiting both the Sydney-based cultural institutions and regional communities.

For the purpose of these principles, ‘regional New South Wales’ may include western and south-western Sydney.

The principles

1 *The Government’s cultural institutions should develop and maintain a range of collaborative activities with arts and cultural organisations in regional New South Wales.*

These activities may include:

- collaborative exhibitions and performances developed jointly by the Government’s institutions and regional, local and community organisations;
- internships, staff exchanges and skills sharing;
- programs and studies for the benefit of moveable heritage collections;
- joint documentation and collection survey projects;
- collection management; and
- design and conservation projects.

2 *Regional programs developed by the Government’s institutions should take into account the needs and interests of local communities and cultural organisations.*

Regional communities should be consulted and closely involved in the planning of the programs and partnerships for their region.

3 *Regional programs developed by the Government’s institutions should foster the development of professional skills in local organisations.*

The Government’s institutions have resources and skills which can be shared with organisations across the State for the benefit of regional communities.

For example, staff of regional museums and galleries, both paid and volunteer, should, as far as possible, be involved in the development of regional projects initiated by the State’s collecting institutions. These would include exhibitions, collection-based projects and education programs. Preference should be given to collaborative projects which are likely to improve the skills of people in the regions.

4 *Regional programs should add to the development of collaborative networks across the State.*

They should build long lasting co-operative links between the Government's institutions and regional New South Wales.

5 *The Government's collecting institutions should ensure that the content and narrative of their exhibitions and other interpretive programs reflect, where appropriate, the people, places and cultures of the whole of New South Wales and not just Sydney or other large cities.*

Increased understanding between the city and the country should be a key goal in such programs.

6 *The collection management strategies of the Government's institutions should take into account the activities of local and regional museums and galleries which manage the distributed collections of the State, and the potential for integration of these strategies and collections.*

In developing and reviewing their collection policies, the Government's institutions need to consider the collecting strengths of particular local and regional museums and galleries with a view to developing co-operative collecting and collection management strategies.

7 *In developing their collection and information databases, the Government's collecting institutions should ensure their compatibility, as far as possible, with databases in local, regional, interstate and national institutions.*

There is a need to increase public access to collections and maximise information-sharing between all collecting bodies. This is consistent with the maintenance of the State's distributed collections and co-operation across Australia (for example, through the national Heritage Collections Council).

8 *Material relating to the history of local communities should, in general, remain within those communities, preferably in a local collecting institution. If another institution wishes to collect this material, it should do so in consultation with local and regional heritage bodies.*

If the Government's collecting institutions undertake collecting in the regions, it must be done without precipitating a loss of confidence in regionally-based programs. All collecting should therefore be undertaken in consultation with, and with the support of, a region's museums and galleries.
