Port Macquarie Museum
Interpretation Policy

1 Introduction and Context

1.1 A museum collection is held in perpetuity, in trust for the community, for their benefit and enjoyment today and in the future. Part of managing the collection is to ensure its interpretation.

1.2 This policy guides the interpretation of the Port Macquarie Museum collection and other objects in our custody and care from time to time.

1.3 For the purpose of this policy, interpretation is defined as the process of engaging visitors and users to create understanding.

1.3 This policy covers all Museum exhibitions, programs, activities and operations which facilitate understanding of the Museum's collection including exhibitions, educational and public programs, and print and electronic publishing.

1.4 This policy establishes the principles that guide the Museum's approach to interpretation and the framework within which interpretative strategies are developed.

1.5 Interpretative strategies are a set of approaches, including exhibitions, face-to-face interpretation, school programs, public programs, online and print-based material, using a variety of methods and formats appropriate to target audiences.

2 Collection Interpretation Principles

2.1 Engaging visitors and users – The Museum's collection is interpreted in vital and engaging ways – with clarity, cogency and meaningful context. The Museum's interpretative strategies aim to inspire, arouse, satisfy curiosity, educate and entertain.

2.2 Collection centred – The Museum's collection is central to the Museum's interpretative strategies, and to the dissemination of information about history and identity.

2.3 Research and learning – The Museum's interpretative strategies are based on the best research and resources available.

2.4 Diversity – The Museum uses a range of interpretative strategies to match the interest, needs and cultural requirements of our diverse audiences, including:

- permanent, temporary and travelling exhibitions
- programs and activities delivered for a range of audiences e.g. cultural tourists, schools students, family groups
- print and online publishing
- innovative and emerging technologies to enhance and enable interactive engagement

3 Best Practice and Innovation

3.1 Port Macquarie Museum is committed to interpretative strategies which reflect best practice. Trends in exhibition development, educational and public programming, and print and online publishing are monitored to ensure strategies and formats used meet target audience needs and expectations, subject to available resources.

3.2 Port Macquarie Museum acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of First Nations people in relation to First Nations collection materials, and ensures it observes cultural protocols.

4 Presentation

4.1 Port Macquarie Museum strives to present the most accurate information in the most accessible ways to enable visitors and users to reach their own understanding of history and identity.

4.2 Interpretation strategies will be designed to enhance the level of engagement between content and audiences, and encourage visitors and users to participate in reflection, debate and discussion about historical issues.

5 Interpretation Themes

Interpretation themes will align with those of the Port Macquarie Museum Collection Policy and described in that policy under items 3.1 to 3.16.

6 Evaluation

The Museum will regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness and success of its interpretation strategies.

7 Responsibilities

7.1 Conception, development and design of interpretation strategies is the responsibility of the Museum Curator and Museum Archivist with input from the Museum Programs and Publications Subcommittees.

7.2 The Museum Programs and Publications Subcommittees are responsible for the overall planning and delivery of the Museum's interpretation strategies.

7.3 The Museum Curator is responsible for the day-to-day organisation and practical management of exhibitions and displays.

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