

1. Policy intent

The purpose of this policy is to establish the framework for developing and managing an art collection for the Tableland Regional Gallery.

2. Scope

This policy is intended to guide the acquisition and management of a high quality visual arts collection for the Tableland Regional Gallery that reflects the history, diversity and uniqueness of the region, and its rich arts heritage and culture, for the long term cultural, social and economic benefit of the Tablelands community.

3. Background/supporting information

- 3.1 This policy has been developed to underpin Tablelands Regional Council's commitment to the arts and to provide a long term vision for developing an art collection for Council's Regional Gallery.
- 3.2 As outlined in the Tablelands Regional Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019¹, Council is committed to develop and maintain community capacity by creating vibrant and healthy communities that proudly support:
- a. Effective community partnerships
 - b. Community resilience
 - c. Healthy, safe and socially cohesive communities.
- 3.3 Tablelands Regional Council's Community Plan 2021² identifies Cultural Vibrancy as one of six key regional aspirations - "Artistic and cultural diversity and heritage is freely expressed, celebrated and shared in a spirit of generosity and sensitivity in a supportive open environment that welcomes change but values its history."
- 3.4 Tablelands Regional Council's Cultural Plan 2013-2016³ states that Council will ensure residents and visitors come together to collaborate, participate in and enjoy the vibrant and diverse cultural life of the Tablelands; that communities and towns across the Tablelands are recognised and valued for their unique character, identity and history, and that people involved in arts and cultural activity on the Tablelands are properly supported and recognised.
- 3.5 Tablelands Regional Council manages three public art galleries, The Tableland Regional Gallery, the Old Post Office Gallery, and the Foyer Gallery. The Tableland Regional Gallery was established by Tablelands Regional Council (then Atherton Shire Council) in 2008. Its aim is to "acquire, preserve, research and exhibit regional, national, historical and contemporary visual arts which are relevant to our community, for the purpose of its enjoyment, education and cultural development."⁴

¹ Tablelands Regional Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019

² Tablelands Regional Council Community Plan 2021

³ Tablelands Regional Council Cultural Plan 2013-2016

⁴ Tableland Regional Gallery Strategic Plan 2015-20

- 3.6 The Tableland Regional Gallery Strategic Plan identifies development of a Collections Program as a key strategic objective. A high priority is placed on acquiring, preserving, researching, exhibiting and co-ordinating visual arts which are relevant to the community. This policy supports this key objective and provides for the commencement and management of an art collection for the region.

4. Policy statement

4.1 Collection policy purpose

- 4.1.1 Council recognises the importance of developing an art collection for the Regional Gallery in order to:

- a. Support the objectives of the Tableland Regional Gallery
- b. Provide an educational resource for the community now and into the future
- c. Support the arts community of the Tablelands through acquisition and exhibition
- d. Encourage an interest in the arts
- e. Contribute to a regional identity and sense of place for the Tablelands
- f. Strengthen the Tablelands as an important arts region
- g. Provide a long term investment for Council in the arts.

- 4.1.2 To achieve this, Council will:

- a. Support the acquisition of artworks for a Gallery collection
- b. Ensure a transparent evaluation process for all collection proposals
- c. Encourage the development of a distinctive collection that reflects local heritage and natural and cultural history and enhances local identity and sense of place
- d. Allow for the collection of high quality artworks in a range of genres and styles from both emerging and established artists
- e. Support best practice art collection management for the Gallery collection through the provision of suitable exhibition and storage facilities and training for staff and volunteers.

- 4.1.3 Operational guidelines for the management of the collection will be developed by Gallery staff in consultation with the Tableland Regional Gallery Advisory Committee.

4.2 Collection criteria

4.2.1 Key Theme

- a. The collection will focus on the following key theme, reflective of the Tablelands heritage and exceptional biodiversity and natural and cultural history of the region:
- b. Natural history of the Atherton Tablelands and Far North Queensland, with particular focus on the Wet Tropics World Heritage area, including fauna, flora and landscapes.
- c. In addition the Gallery may also collect artworks that fit within the following themes:
 - i. Cultural history of the Atherton Tablelands and Far North Queensland relating to pre and post European settlement of the region
 - ii. Aboriginal art representative of local indigenous groups or with a Far North Queensland subject
 - iii. Works of emerging or established artists with a connection to the Atherton Tablelands or Far North Queensland.

4.2.2 Type of works

The collection may include artworks in a range of genres and styles including painting, photography, sculpture and other 3D artwork.

4.3 Documenting the collection

All items accepted into the collection will be documented in an appropriate accessioning database. This information will be kept up to date by Gallery staff and will include all relevant information pertaining to the artworks including provenance, artist, condition, photographs of item, and valuation.

4.4 Collection maintenance, storage and conservation

4.4.1 Currently the Tableland Regional Gallery does not have adequate storage space on site with suitable environmental conditions to house a collection. This has been identified as a priority for the Gallery. In the interim, items from the collection that are not on current exhibition at the Regional Gallery may be displayed in secure locations in the Foyer or Old Post Office galleries, or Council's administrative offices. Items in the collection may be rotated to different locations as appropriate to ensure most effective and secure storage conditions and maximise appreciation of the artworks, until suitable on site storage at the Gallery can be provided.

4.4.2 The collection will be managed by the staff and volunteers of the Tableland Regional Gallery. Professional conservation assessment of works in the collection will be undertaken as deemed necessary.

4.5 Acquisition

4.5.1 Acquisition criteria

- a. In the first instance recommendations regarding the acquisition of items for the collection will be made by the Tableland Regional Gallery Advisory Committee and referred to Council for approval. As the collection grows, it will be necessary to identify a specialised and suitably qualified Collection Sub-committee. In considering any proposed acquisition, the Tableland Regional Gallery Advisory Committee (or specialist sub-committee) will consider the following:
 - i. Relevance to the Gallery's collection criteria
 - ii. Significance in the regional context
 - iii. Established provenance, ownership and documentation
 - iv. Rarity and representativeness
 - v. Condition and conservation requirements including cost of maintenance and conservation treatment
 - vi. Storage including size and display requirements
 - vii. Exhibition potential
 - viii. Value for money
- b. The Gallery will not accept permanent loans of artworks into its collection.
- c. Council's Insurance and Asset Support Officer will be advised of the acquisition of any artwork valued at in excess of \$5,000.

4.5.2 Donations

The suitability of a proposed donated artwork will be assessed by the Tableland Regional Gallery Advisory Committee (or Collection Sub-committee) in the first instance, and a recommendation made to Council to accept or decline the donation. The donor will be advised in writing of the

outcome. The Gallery will not accept conditional donations. All donors will be asked to confirm legal ownership and to sign a Deed of Gift.

4.5.3 Purchases

From time to time, the Gallery may have opportunities to purchase suitable artworks for its collection. Funds may be raised through Friends of the Gallery, donations to the Gallery's Gift Fund, targeted fundraising campaigns, grants bequests and benefactors, or through financial assistance from Council.

4.5.4 Competition

Council may choose to establish an annual acquisitive art prize based on a chosen and relevant theme for the Gallery collection, in consultation with the Tableland Regional Gallery Advisory Committee, and to set aside funds each year for this purpose. This competition would be managed by the Gallery staff and volunteers, with professional advice and judging.

4.6 De-accessioning

4.6.1 Decision on the de-accessioning of artworks from the collection and permanently removing them will be made by the Tableland Regional Gallery Advisory Committee and referred to Council for approval. Artwork will be considered for de-accessioning where:

- a. The artist or subject matter no longer complies with the current collection policy
- b. Conservation and storage costs are beyond the means of the Gallery
- c. The work is damaged beyond repair
- d. There is a disputed claim of ownership and a substantiated request for its return to its original owner.

4.6.2 Where an item is listed for de-accessioning, the following options will be considered, and the most appropriate course of action selected:

- a. Return the artwork to the donor or their family
- b. Exchange the artwork with another gallery for something more suitable
- c. Transfer the item to another organisation with similar objectives
- d. Use as an educational tool
- e. Sell to raise funds for the Tableland Regional Gallery's purposes
- f. Destroy if the artwork is damaged beyond repair.

4.7 Loans

While the Tableland Regional Gallery collection is small, requests for loans will be considered on a case by case basis by Gallery staff in consultation with the Tableland Regional Gallery Advisory Committee. Any costs associated with a loan from the collection including transport and insurance must be met by the borrowing organisation. Should the collection grow in size and stature in the future, procedures will be developed for managing loan requests.

4.8 Access to the collection and records

Access to the collection and collection records may be provided to researchers and those with a special interest by arrangement through Gallery staff. The collection may also be made available as a resource for educational groups and volunteers.

5. Responsibility

Council is responsible for the adoption, amendment and repeal of the Policy and the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the development and amendment of any associated procedures and guidelines relevant to the Policy.

6. Review

It is the responsibility of the General Manager Community, Planning & Environment to monitor the adequacy of this policy and recommend appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every three years or as required by Council.

This Policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended/repealed by resolution of Council.

JUSTIN COMMONS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER