

COLLECTIONS ACQUISITIONS POLICY

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Approved by NTSA Council	July 2025	Review Date	July 2027

1 Overview

The responsibility for managing Collection acquisitions for the National Trust of South Australia (NTSA) is delegated to the **Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (CHAC)** by the **Governing Council**, except where acquisitions involve financial purchase.

In such cases, Governing Council approval is required.

2 Scope

The NTSA will develop its Collections through the acquisition of items that align with the organisation's mission and values.

All Collection acquisitions must meet at least one(1) of the following priority criteria, listed in order of significance:

- 2.1 The item relates directly to a National Trust property – either its pre-Trust history or its interpretation as a Trust-managed site
- 2.2 The item demonstrates high artistic quality, historical importance or is of national or regional significance
- 2.3 The item has a strong south Australian provenance
- 2.4 The item represents the lives and contributions of South Australia's diverse population and communities
- 2.5 The item reflects underrepresented themes in South Australian history, particularly those not well covered by other collecting institutions.

3 Current Collections

Collections currently under direct management by NTSA include:

- Ayers House
- Collingrove Homestead
- North Adelaide Baptist Church
- NTSA Archives
- NTSA Costume Collection (housed at Beaumont House)
- Stangate House
- Z Ward

4 Collection Acquisition Conditions and Assessment Criteria

4.1 Acquisitions Criteria

In evaluating potential acquisitions, the NTSA will assess the following:

- 4.1.1 Is legal title to the item available to the NTSA
- 4.1.2 Is the item unencumbered and free of conditions or restrictions
- 4.1.3 Is the provenance (history or ownership and use) clearly documented
- 4.1.4 Is the item in a condition that the NTSA can adequately conserve and care for
- 4.1.5 Can the item be utilised for research, exhibitions, educational or interpretive purposes
- 4.1.6 Does the NTSA have the long-term resources to preserve and maintain the item
- 4.1.7 Are appropriate storage facilities available for its protection, and
- 4.1.8 Will the donor cover associated transport or delivery costs.

4.2 Grounds for Rejection

Items will be declined under the following conditions:

- 4.2.1 The item is unrelated to Australian history
- 4.2.2 The item contains hazardous materials
- 4.2.3 The item is in poor condition and lacks sufficient justification for acquisition (e.g., it lacks strong provenance to a NTSA property)
- 4.2.4 The item is offered with unacceptable conditions
- 4.2.5 The donor or vendor cannot demonstrate clear legal ownership
- 4.2.6 The item lacks primary documentation or evidence of its significance, or
- 4.2.7 The item is an unnecessary duplicate of material already held, unless it completes a set or serves a unique interpretive purpose.

4.3 Loans and Conditional Offers

The NTSA does not accept items on permanent, perpetual or long-term loan.

Any item offered under such terms will not be considered unless all conditions are removed.

4.4 Approval Process

- 4.4.1 Items offered as gifts or donations will be assessed by the Collections staff and if supported, recommended to CHAC for final approval
- 4.4.2 Items requiring purchase must be recommended by Collections staff, approved by CHAC and receive final approval from the Governing Council
- 4.4.3 In exceptional circumstances, a Collections acquisition that does not meet one or more of the above criteria may be approved only with the support of Collections staff, a CHAC recommendation and final endorsement by the Governing Council.

A Guideline for Assessing Suitability for Acquisition

Objects must be able to be adequately and appropriately:

Preserved	☐ Is the object in excellent condition, stable and needing no work done to be displayed ☐ If the object is damaged, is the damage integral to its history? ☐ Is there the ability to keep it looked after, stored and in the best condition? ☐ What is in place to isolate this object from the collection to avoid contamination with pests, chemicals etc?
Conserved	☐ Would any damage be worth fixing completely or partially? ☐ Could we afford conservation work on this object? ☐ Do we anticipate any conservation issues with this object? ☐ Is any work to be done to stabilise the object only as much as necessary? ☐ Is all conservation work being undertaken by a trained professional?
Researched	☐ Is there the ability to research this object thoroughly with primary sources to verify?
Documented	☐ Is the object being donated with adequate documentation in the form of letters, photographs, first-hand accounts (primary sources) and verification of legal ownership?
Stored	☐ Is there space in existing storage to adequately store the object? ☐ Is a new storage solution needed, or would this object require specialised storage?
Maintained	☐ Can the object be cared for long-term via regular cleaning, proper storage and handling with adequate cataloguing and audits? ☐ Can it be isolated for pest management before integrating with collection?
Interpreted	☐ Can the object be interpreted more than one way? ☐ Does display or storage of the object impact the interpretative uses? ☐ Does it align with the collections of the National Trust of South Australia?