**MUSEUM *of* RICHMOND**

**Documentation Policy, 2017**

**Date for review: 2019**

Introduction:

Documentation of collections information is core to the Museum of Richmond demonstrating its accountability for the collections. It underpins every aspect of museum activity.

This policy is to ensure that the information we record relating to the collections is as accurate, secure, consistent and accessible as possible.

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Museum of Richmond fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the management and stewardship of its collections by:

* Improving accountability for the collections;
* Documenting the collections to professionally standards of best practice. As a minimum having Spectrum inventory level records for each object or group of objects permanently or temporarily in the care of Museum of Richmond while aiming to have a catalogue level record for each object as defined by Spectrum standards;
* Continuing to extend digital access to collections information through the expansion of the eHive online catalogue;
* Ensuring and strengthening the security of collections information.

Accountability:

Accountability as defined by the Museum and Galleries Commission:

“The principles are that a museum should know at any time exactly for what it is legally responsible (this includes loans as well as permanent collections), and where each item is located.” *(MGC 1993)*

Documenting to a minimum of inventory level ensures location recording.

All requests for information will be considered in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Data Protection Act (1998). Requests relating to confidential information will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with applicable legislation and any legal or condition of gift agreements.

Documentation:

The vast majority of objects within the collection will be documented to individual item level. In rare cases, it may prove necessary to have items documented at group level first. As a minimum objects will be documented to Spectrum inventory level with the aim of each object being documented to catalogue level as defined by Spectrum.

Our existing records consist of a mix of hard copy entry forms, daybooks and accession registers alongside digital records held on the eHive Collections Management System. In order to maintain entry procedures and improve access all new acquisitions will have hard copy entry paperwork, an entry in the physical accession register and a digital eHive record.

Access:

We will continue our digitisation project to ensure an eHive record exists for each object in the collection and in a phased approach will transfer information from the hard copy formats into the relevant digital records.

Security:

eHive is a cloud based system so is secure from loss of information at a local level. Paper records (Entry/Loan forms) are kept on file in the Museum and are recorded in an accessions register.

Notes:

In addition to the above the accuracy, security and preservation of the collections information is further ensured by:

* There being efficient links between objects and all relevant data, in the form of object numbering.
* Monitoring the potential obsolescence of electronic systems, and updating systems or transferring information where necessary, to ensure the long-term accessibility of the information held.
* Only suitably trained personnel are responsible for carrying out documentation procedures.
* Following detailed operational guidelines concerning the procedures for documentation. These can be found in the Museum Documentation Procedural Manual.