

Declaration of the Value of Museums to Education

Museums... are universal educational institutions of immense expressive power and authority. They hold their resources in trust for all people.

They communicate with us across boundaries of language, culture and time, and suggest comparisons which illuminate our experience of the present...

Through museums, we have direct contact with peoples of all ages and cultures, experience the unimaginable variety of the natural world and expand our understanding of what it means to be human.¹

Museums are essential places of learning. They enable and support young Australians to become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners and active and informed citizens through unique and authentic learning experiences.

Museums are critical partners with government, schools and communities in the promotion of equity and excellence in education through access to sites, collections, exhibitions, professional staff, programs and resources.

Engagement with, and enjoyment of, Australia's wealth of natural and cultural heritage should be:

- Integral to the learning outcomes proposed in all areas of the National Curriculum, and
- Embedded in the teaching and learning strategies of the National Curriculum.

Museums and National Curriculum learning outcomes

Museums are integral to the learning outcomes proposed in the National Curriculum by:

- (a) Deepening and broadening the learning experience of all Australian students and teachers, by exposing them to the diversity, singularity and complexity of Australia's natural and cultural heritage, and to the ways in which this has been, and continues to be, expressed;
- (b) Educating students about the place of humanity in the environment, the nature of the physical universe, and the impacts of global development and change;
- (c) Strengthening awareness of the value of diversity and sustainability;
- (d) Contributing to students' understanding of Australian national identities; and
- (e) Developing student understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens through providing local, regional, national and global perspectives.

¹ *A Common Wealth* – Museums in the Learning Age, Report by David Anderson, revised 1999

Museums and teaching and learning strategies

Museums enrich teaching and learning by:

- (a) Providing teachers and students with opportunities for direct and virtual access to material culture (primary sources, including sites);
- (b) Supporting access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture;
- (c) Fostering the development of student self-esteem through active student-centred learning;
- (d) Responding to individual abilities and learning preferences;
- (e) Encouraging skills development, collaboration, problem solving and dialogue in safe, stimulating environments; and
- (f) Offering students hands-on, experiential and visual learning outside the classroom.

What is a museum?

A museum helps people understand the world by using objects and ideas to understand and interpret the past and present and explore the future. A museum preserves and researches collections, and makes objects and information accessible in actual and virtual environments. Museums are established in the public interest as permanent, not-for-profit organisations that contribute long-term value to communities.

The use of the word “museum” in this document is broadly inclusive of galleries, science and natural history centres, historic sites and heritage places, monuments, keeping places and cultural centres, zoos and herbaria, libraries and archives and includes collections, resources, programs and exhibitions.

What is the Museums Australia Education National Network?

Museums Australia (MA) is the national organisation for the museums sector, committed to the conservation, continuation and communication of Australia’s heritage. MA encompasses places and their collections, and covers the conservation, continuation and communication of Australia’s historic, natural and Indigenous heritage: tangible and intangible.

The Education National Network is a professional body of educators in museums across Australia founded in 1975. It came under the auspices of MA in 1993.

Working with the National Curriculum Board

We are committed to working with the National Curriculum Board and its processes to ensure that the museums sector can play its part in helping to deliver a world class curriculum for Australian schools.

Contact details

To contact the Education National Network go to:
<http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/site/page75.php>