
Taralga Historical Society Collection Policy

The Taralga Historical Society was established in 1972. Community members were concerned that some buildings were being demolished in Taralga resulting in aspects of the town's history being lost. These people wanted to preserve the history of the town and, therefore, formed the Taralga Historical Society (THS). They were fortunate to acquire the historic Methodist church, in Orchard Street, Taralga, as their headquarters, a landmark that has stood since 1868.

From these humble beginnings the THS has grown to a membership of over 120 and has established a complex, consisting of the Church Museum, Cordingley Settler's Cottage, Fernbank Schoolhouse, a Nissen Hut Military Display, a Machinery Shed, Heritage Shed with shearing and blacksmithing displays, Blay's Slab Dairy, an Interactive Research Centre and a beautiful memorial rose garden, all of which is a valuable resource of local history being preserved for future generations.

The Objectives of THS are to:

- implement collections' management activities to ensure preservation of our collections,
- acknowledge our commitment as stewards of the collections by responsibly preserving and maintaining the culture and heritage of the Taralga District,
- maintain a source of written and photographic material on local families that is accessible to genealogists and family historians, and
- maintain standards of best practise for the development, care and preservation of our collections.

Introduction

The purpose of this Collection Policy is to guide the acquisition of objects for THS, located in the small rural community of Taralga. Our primary focus is on preserving and showcasing the history, culture, and heritage of our local area. This policy outlines the criteria and guidelines for accepting objects that have a strong connection to our community, while also considering the educational value, historical significance, and long-term sustainability of the THS's collections.

1. Collection Scope:

1.1. THS aims to collect, preserve, interpret, and display artefacts and historical materials that are directly relevant to the local area's history, culture, and heritage, always being conscious of our capacity to display and/or store these artefacts.

1.2. The collection will primarily focus on objects that have a clear and significant connection to Taralga and its surrounding area.

1.3. The museum will consider accepting acquisitions that can enhance the understanding and interpretation of our local area's history, even if they are not directly connected but have substantial educational value.

2. Acquisition Criteria:

2.1. Acquisitions should have a proven connection to the local area and its history, culture, or heritage. This can include items created or used by local residents, objects associated with significant events or individuals from the community, or materials that provide valuable insights into the community's past.

2.2. Preference will be given to acquisitions that fill gaps in the existing collection or complement existing objects, helping to create a cohesive and comprehensive representation of the local area's history.

2.3. The THS will prioritise items that are in good condition and can be properly preserved and maintained, ensuring their long-term survival and display.

2.4. Acquisitions should align with the THS's available resources, including storage space, conservation capabilities, and financial sustainability.

3. Acquisition Process:

3.1. The THS will actively seek acquisitions through donations and bequests primarily focusing on objects that meet the acquisition criteria outlined in this policy.

3.2. The THS executive members; President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, in consultation with the appropriate experts and stakeholders, will assess potential acquisitions based on their relevance to the local area, historical significance, educational value, and THS's capacity to care for and display the objects.

3.3. The final decision on accepting or declining an acquisition will be made by the THS executive members.

3.4. The museum will maintain accurate records and documentation for all acquisitions, including provenance, donor information, condition reports, and any agreements associated with the acquisition. The records will also assign a catalogue number and details such as accession date, category of item and location of where the item is housed. These records will be maintained via *Musarch*, an archival software program.

3.5. Unsolicited offers of objects must follow the acquisition process. Any object offered to THS for inclusion into the collection cannot be left at the complex premises without prior arrangement with the President. Any such item will also require information regarding the donor's contact details and as much relevant information on the identification of the object and the provenance as is known.

4. Deaccessioning:

4.1. Deaccessioning is a process that requires tact. Most people give items to the THS because they want to see them preserved for future generations, and deaccessioning is therefore a sensitive process as it can be seen as a rejection of a gift to the community. This process will be handled tactfully.

4.2. THS may consider deaccessioning objects that no longer align with the collection's scope or are deemed redundant, in poor condition, or lacking in historical or educational value.

4.3. Deaccessioned objects will be handled responsibly and sensitively, following the deaccessioning procedures of returning them to the original donor or their descendants, offering the objects to other museums, or responsibly disposing of them. Disposal of these objects may be through sale. Proceeds will then be transferred to the THS budget for use in other purposes within the Society.

4.4. After deaccessioning has been carried out the *Musarch* records for the appropriate item will be adjusted to reflect this action.

5. Preservation and Conservation:

Conservation - treatments that stabilise the object so that it may be accessed but do not remove the evidence of the object's history.

Restoration - an attempt to return the object to as near original condition as possible.

5.1. THS will provide the best storage conditions available within its resources. Where an object is of significance it will be afforded priority for improved conditions as resources become available. All collection objects not on exhibition will be kept in the secure storage locations of the complex.

5.2. Appropriate pest control measures will be taken and periodic inspections for fire safety compliance will be carried out to preserve our collection.

5.3. Air conditioning will be used in the Museum to aid in minimising damage caused by moisture to our exhibits.

5.4. An Archival Team, made up of volunteers, will meet monthly to work on accessioning, archiving and conservation of the collections held by the THS.

6. Loans:

6.1. Items held by the THS may not be removed from the complex premises without the permission of the President.

6.2. Any item removed from the complex, on loan, needs to be entered into the *Loans File*, found on the front desk.

7. Access and Research:

7.1. The Interactive Research Centre, housed in the Masonic Hall, holds an extensive genealogical research collection on many of the original and current local families of Taralga and the surrounding area, as well as the early activities and businesses of the area. There is also extensive information pertaining to the Stonequarry Cemetery. All of these records will be available for research purposes under the supervision and support of our volunteers rostered on duty.

7.2. Research items may not be removed from the complex premises without the permission of the President.

7.3. The Oral History component of the Research Centre will be available to researchers and visitors to the complex under the supervision of our volunteers.

7.4. The Photo Gallery, housed in the Masonic Lodge, consists of photographs of the Taralga area and its families.

8. Review and Revision:

8.1. This Collection Policy will be reviewed periodically, at least once every three years, to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

8.2. Any proposed revisions to this policy will be subject to approval by THS executive members.

By adhering to this Collection Policy, THS aims to build a collection that is deeply rooted in the local community, serving as a valuable educational resource and a reflection of the area's unique heritage.