



MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

CODE OF ETHICS

1999

CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART, HISTORY & SCIENCE MUSEUMS

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PREFACE TO ORIGINAL EDITION - 1985

Our museums include a great variety of institutions, all playing an important role in the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage. That role is continually changing in response to wider social and political pressures and to the needs of society as they are perceived from within the museum.

Some of these changes are easily discernible - the increase in community-related activities, greater environmental concern, and acquisition policies giving greater recognition to the claims of indigenous peoples. Related but perhaps less obvious changes are also occurring in the ethical basis on which museum people make decisions in their professional capacity.

In this climate of change, the Council of Australian Museum Associations (CAMA) decided to compile this Code of Ethics as a general guide to assist members in making decisions about the ethical issues with which they may be confronted.

This Code also cannot be considered a complete document covering every possible facet of museum activities; these are far too varied and complex for ethical conduct to be itemised.

CAMA hopes, however, that the Code will be used as a reference point by governing bodies and individuals. The statements are intended to be measuring sticks against which current museum policy and practice can be tested for ethical content.

In the preparation of this document, we have drawn on the experience of museum associations in other parts of the world, notably the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. We should like to acknowledge our debt to them. Many museum professionals assisted in the preparation of this Code, especially:

Lanier Graham, Glen Hunt, Desmond Kennard, Patricia McDonald,
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INTRODUCTION TO SECOND EDITION 1994

On the 3 December 1993 the Art Museums Association of Australia Inc., the Museums Association of Australia Inc., the Museum Education Association of Australia Inc. and the Council of Australian Museum Associations Inc. amalgamated. The Code of Ethics was adopted as the Code of Ethics of the amalgamating associations. On 1 January 1994 Museum Australia was established from these amalgamating associations.

DEFINITIONS

in this Code of Ethics, the following definitions shall apply:

Curator - person responsible for a collection, equivalent to the British term 'keeper' and the French term 'conservator', but not a person thus designated for administrative convenience, e.g. 'curator of education' or 'curator of exhibitions'

Director - chief executive officer of a museum

Governing body - the group of people who decide the policies and priorities of the museum (e.g., museum council, trust, board)

Museum - defined in 1.1 below

Museum officer - one of the paid staff

Staff - the personnel of a museum, employed or voluntary, paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time

Volunteer - a person who, although not paid by the museum, nevertheless is treated in all respects as though he or she were a member of staff.

Museums Australia has branches in each state and territory and currently (August 1994) the following areas are embracing special interest groups

Maritime Museums

Registrars

Designers

Health and Medical Museums

International Committee

Museum Conservation

Museum Education

Museum Historians

Museum Membership

Performing Arts Heritage

Sports Heritage

Women in Museums

In August 1994 the Code of Ethics was amended to reflect the new association, Museums Australia.

INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS

1 DEFINITION OF A MUSEUM

- 1.1 The International Council of Museums (ICOM), an agency of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), defines a museum as a non-profit-making, permanent institution, in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.' (ICOM Statutes, 1974)

In addition to museums designated as such, ICOM recognises that the following comply with the above definition:

- a. conservation institutes, and exhibition galleries permanently maintained by libraries and archive centres;
 - b. natural, archaeological and ethnographic monuments and sites, and historical monuments and sites of a museum nature, for their acquisition, conservation and communication activities;
 - c. institutions displaying live specimens, such as botanic and zoological gardens, aquaria, vivaria, etc.;
 - d. nature reserves;
 - e. science centres and planetaria.
- 1.2 Museums Australia should be fully supported by all museum governing bodies who should encourage and facilitate opportunities for their museum staff to participate in the work of the member association, branches and special interest groups.

2 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR MUSEUMS

For even the smallest museum, the following minimum requirements are considered essential. These requirements will vary in detail according to the size and responsibility of each museum.

- 2.1 *Constitution* - The governing body of a museum must prepare and publicise a clear statement of its charter, goals and policies, and of its role and composition.
- 2.2 *Finance* - Sufficient funds must be regularly forthcoming either from public or private sources, together with other sources of income such as admission charges or trading activities, to carry out and develop the work of the Museum. Museums may seek funds from private sources as well as the three levels of Government (federal, state and local). Proper accounting procedures must be followed. Credit for sponsorship should never be more prominent than that given to the museum itself.
- 2.3 *Collections* - The collections should comprise high quality objects acquired under a stated acquisition policy. These collections must be properly housed, conserved, documented, photographed, and displayed.
- 2.4 *Premises* - Premises must be adequate for the museum to fulfil within its accepted policy its basic functions of collection, research, storage, conservation, education and display. The space should include, if appropriate, allocation to office, laboratory, workshop and cleaning staff.
- 2.5 *Protection* - The best possible safeguards must be sought, day and night throughout the year, against such hazards as theft, fire, flood, vandalism, careless handling, uncontrolled environment and consequent deterioration.
- 2.6 *Staff* - Staff should be composed of people who are paid, and properly qualified in the fields in which they specialise, i.e. curatorial, technical, conservation, education, administration, display, security, etc. In museums where funds are insufficient to pay staff, the director should facilitate participation in training courses and seminars as a means of improving the competence of those involved. The director must have full internal administrative authority and direct access to the governing body to whom he/she is responsible.
- 2.7 *Educational role* - Every opportunity must be developed for the museum to be used as an educational resource by all sections of the public.
- 2.8 *Publications and publicity* - Museums should publicise and promote their activities to maintain a broad level of public involvement. They should publish catalogues of their collections to facilitate greater understanding and appreciation of the aims of the collections and the objects contained in them.
- 2.9 *Public access* - The public must have access to the displays during reasonable hours for regular periods, reasonable access to staff and to undisplayed collections by appointment or other arrangement, and full access to information about collections.
- 2.10 *Physical access* - Museums must provide the best possible access and facilities to cater for the needs of disabled people. In the planning of a new building, the museum must follow appropriate standards.
- 2.11 *Uses of the institution* - Temporary exhibitions and all other special events must be in accordance with a stated policy relevant to the collections and must not compromise the quality of those collections.

Commercial support and sponsorship - A museum using commercial support and sponsorship for its collections and activities must ensure that the standards, goals and integrity of the museum are not compromised by such a relationship. While commercial sponsors of a museum collection and its activities should be acknowledged, their names and logos should be less prominent than those of the museum in all related promotional material.

- 2.13 *Museum shops and commercial activities* - Such programs and their publicity must be in accordance with a stated policy relevant to the collections and the basic educational purpose of the museum, and must not compromise the quality of those collections. Wares for sale in museum shops must be validly acquired and of proven authenticity. Reproductions of objects on display and on sale, including postcards and reproductive prints, should provide a proper and accurate representation of those objects.
- 2.14 *Community and multicultural involvement* - Encouragement should be given to the general community and to specific individuals and groups within it to become actively involved in museums and to support their aims and policies. There should be consultation with ethnic groups and indigenous peoples (or their nominated representatives) as to the context in which their objects are to be displayed and whether they are to be displayed at all.

- 2.15 *Disposal of material property* - In the event of its dissolution, the museum in its constitution should make provision for the disposal of property and collections to properly constituted organisations with similar aims.

3 ACQUISITIONS TO MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

- 3.1 Each museum authority should adopt and publish a written statement of its acquisitions policy. This policy should be reviewed from time to time and acquisitions outside the current stated policy should only be made in very exceptional circumstances.
- 3.2 Museums Australia fully supports the international efforts of UNESCO, ICOM and other organisations to control and eliminate international trafficking in stolen and/or illegally exported works of art (particularly of indigenous peoples), antiquities, endangered or protected animal and plant species, and any other museum objects.
- 3.3 Museums Australia supports the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970. Each museum should comply with the terms and ethical principles of the Convention so far as these are applicable to an individual museum authority. The Australian Government is a signatory to this Convention.
- 3.4 A museum should not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object, unless the governing body and responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the specimen or object in question and that in particular it has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin and/or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned, in violation of that country's laws. However where the validity of ownership is in question, the museum could act as custodian pending resolution.
- 3.5 In regard to biological and geological material, a museum should not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen which has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection law, natural history conservation law, quarantine regulation, or treaty of Australia or any other country except with the express consent of appropriate outside authorities.
- 3.6 In addition to the safeguards above, the museum should not acquire objects in any case where the governing body and responsible officer have reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of Aboriginal or other indigenous people's ritual places or other known archaeological sites, or involved a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land.
- 3.7 In connection with the above three points (3.4., 3.5. and 3.6), special attention is drawn to the regulations under the Australian Heritage Act and to the various State and Federal Acts regarding the powers of museums and other bodies in the protection of the natural and cultural heritage. Refers also to 'Previous Possessions, New Obligations' - Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- 3.8 If appropriate and feasible, the same conditions as outlined in the above paragraphs should be applied when determining whether to accept loans for exhibition or other purposes.
- 3.9 If a museum should have in its possession an object which can be demonstrated to have been exported or otherwise transferred in violation of the principles of the UNESCO Convention and the country of origin seeks its return and demonstrates that it is part of that country's cultural heritage, the museum should, if legally free to do so, take reasonable steps to co-operate in the return of the object to the country of origin.
- 3.10 Each museum authority should recognise the need for co-operation and consultation between all museums with similar or overlapping interests and collecting policies, and should seek to consult with such other institutions on defining areas of specialisation.
- 3.11 Loans, gifts and bequests should be accepted only if they conform to stated acquisition and exhibition policies. Gifts which include special conditions may have to be rejected if the long-range benefit is not in the best interest of the general public. Improperly valued or attributed loans, gifts or bequests should not be accepted into collections, especially when tax benefits are involved. Improperly priced purchases should not be made.

- 3.12 Neither members of the staff, nor members of the governing bodies, nor members of their families nor close associates should ever be permitted to purchase objects which have been deaccessioned from a collection. Purchases from any of the above-named individuals should not be made. Tax-benefit gifts from any of the above-mentioned individuals must be carefully considered against the policy guidelines.
- 3.13 When acquiring works of art each museum authority must recognise the moral rights of artists whereby:
- a. proper acknowledgment of authorship is given in display labels at all times when works are on display to the public, and in all publicity where such works are referred to or reproduced;
 - b. respect is given to the installation and display requirements of artists whose work has been acquired;
 - c. written agreements are made with artists, when commissioning their works, on matters of copyright, insurance, transport, fees, installation, ownership, maintenance, warranty and repairs, termination, publicity, changes prior to completion, permanency of location or works, non-assignability and disputes;
 - d. all measures are taken to ensure that works are not intentionally destroyed, mutilated, distorted, or altered except for bona fide conservation work;

Museums are encouraged to obtain from artists whose work they have acquired licences to reproduce works.

4 DISPLAY OF COLLECTIONS

- 4.1 The museum is responsible for ensuring that a museum officer placing an object on display respects the wishes of the ethnic group(s) from which that object originates. Consultants from the cultures concerned should be involved in the development of exhibition policy.
- 4.2 When an object is displayed, care must be taken to minimise the possibility of any damage or deterioration.
- 4.3 No object shall be placed on display if in the opinion of the appropriate curator, conservator or other relevant professional, the condition of that object would be seriously impaired.
- 4.4 No object shall be lent from the museum for display elsewhere without the written recommendation of the relevant curator. Authorised condition reports and loan agreement forms must be provided to the borrower at the direction of the curator.
- 4.5 Where an object on display is not the original, it should be appropriately identified.
- 4.6 The individuals concerned with the creation of a major permanent or temporary display should be acknowledged in publications associated with the exhibition; in other instances, recognition should be given in an appropriate form.
- 4.7 In displaying works of art each museum authority must:
- a. give proper acknowledgment of authorship of works in display labels to be shown at all times when the works are on display to the public, and in all publicity where such works are referred to or reproduced;
 - b. respect the installation and display requirements of artists whose work is on display;
 - c. make written agreements with artists, when borrowing their works, on matters of copyright, insurance, transport, exhibition fees, restoration, sale, loan periods, framing and storage.
- 4.8 The museum has an obligation to make available to the public, in an appropriate form, information concerning any aspect of the displays.

5 RESEARCH INTO COLLECTIONS

- 5.1 Research is one of a museum's most important functions. Curators should spend as much time as possible documenting and interpreting collections. A clear policy should exist concerning research and the publication of research findings, which should be disseminated beyond the museum where appropriate.
- 5.2 As a rule, research done by a curator is the property of the museum employing that curator. Some exceptions do exist, especially work done on private time. If a museum does not wish to publish a body of work done by one of its curators, that curator is free to publish it elsewhere with the understanding that fees and/or royalties should be shared between the curator and the museum which has sponsored the research.

6 DISPOSAL OF COLLECTIONS

- 6.1 By definition, one of the key functions of a museum is to acquire objects and keep them for posterity. Consequently there must be a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the collections of a museum.
- 6.2 Where the museum has legislation regarding disposal, or has acquired objects subject to conditions of disposal, these requirements must be complied with.
- 6.3 Even where general powers of disposal exist, a museum may not be completely free to dispose of items acquired: where financial assistance has been obtained from an outside source (e.g. government grant-in-aid, friends of the museum organisation, private benefactor), disposal may require the consent of all parties who had contributed to the purchase or controlled the bequest.
- 6.4 In those cases where a museum is free to dispose of an object (e.g., by virtue of a local Act of Parliament or High Court decision), any steps to sell or otherwise dispose of material from the collections should be taken only after due consideration, and such material might well be offered first, by exchange, gift or private treaty sale, to other museums before sale by public auction or other means is considered.
- 6.5 A decision to dispose of any object should be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum, not of the curator of the collection concerned acting alone. No object should be deaccessioned without the written recommendation of the relevant curator. Full records should be kept of all such decisions and the objects involved, and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the object concerned, including photographic records.
- 6.6 Any monies received by the governing body from the disposal of objects should be applied solely for the upgrading of the collection either by purchase or by conservation.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

7 PRINCIPLES

Museum officers have obligations not only to museum objects but also to the owners and/or custodians of those objects and to their institution, to their colleagues and their profession, and to the public as a whole in their own country and world-wide.

The following Code seeks to express principles which will guide officers in the ethical practice of their profession:

- 7.1. Museum officers must at all times conduct themselves in accordance with the duties, values and status of the profession.
- 7.2. Museum officers must be careful and conscientious in the performance of their professional duties.
- 7.3. Museum officers must faithfully discharge their responsibilities to the employing authority.
- 7.4. Museum officers must at all times with due regard to the performance of their duties and the interests of their institution, act loyally towards their professional colleagues, director and governing body.
- 7.5. Museum officers must not, while practising their profession, carry on, or engage in, any operation of trade or business which is out of keeping with the fitting or proper discharge of their professional duties, or which could raise doubts as to their professional integrity.
- 7.6. Museum officers who in their official appointment have under their direction junior staff, trainees, students and assistants carrying out a stage of their professional training, must give them the benefit of their experience and knowledge and must treat them with the consideration and respect customary among members of the profession.
- 7.7. Museum officers should use their influence in all matters which affect their professional relationships, to the extent that harmony, goodwill and honourable conduct shall govern such mutual relationships.
- 7.8. Museum officers must not countenance discrimination in race, sex, religion or politics against their professional colleagues, and must not allow rumour or innuendo to affect decisions concerning others.

8 PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MUSEUM OFFICER TO THE COLLECTIONS

- 8.1 The officer should ensure that all items accepted temporarily or permanently by the museum are properly and fully documented to facilitate provenance, identification, condition and treatment.
- 8.2 All objects accepted by the museum should be properly conserved and maintained, and the objects documented and exhibited to the widest possible audience.
- 8.3 No item from the collections of a museum should be disposed of except in accordance with the rules applying in the museums in question. Museum officers should exercise their best endeavours so that no collection or any part of a collection is disposed of except in accordance with established policy. No part of the collection should be disposed of without the written recommendation of the relevant curator.
- 8.4 The museum officer must provide access to the collections to any member of the public whenever possible.

9 PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MUSEUM OFFICER TO THE PUBLIC

- 9.1 In their relations with the public, museum officers should accept such opportunity as may be presented or sought to educate the public in the aims, desires and purposes of their profession in order that a better popular understanding of its purpose and responsibilities may be established.
- 9.2 In the interests of the public as well as their own profession, museum officers should observe accepted standards and laws, uphold the dignity and honour of the profession and accept its self-imposed disciplines. They should do their part to safeguard the public against illegal or unethical conduct by referring the facts of such delinquency to the director or other appropriate authority. Further, it is the right of any officer to give proper advice (while observing due caution) when it is requested by those seeking relief against negligent or unethical practices.
- 9.3 Although the results of the examination and treatment of museum objects may make it possible for them to contribute knowledge to the history of a discipline and to the verification of an object, the issue of paid valuations or authentications may involve conflict of interest and is not an appropriate or ethical activity for a museum officer.
- 9.4 Paid consulting services to individuals and private-sector organisations should not be provided by museum officers without the express approval of the director. Fees from consulting services may be appropriated by the officer's museum.
- 9.5 Museum officers should deal with the public efficiently and courteously at all times.
- 9.6 Museum officers should deal promptly with all correspondence and inquiries and should, subject to the requirements of confidentiality in a particular case, answer such correspondence and inquiries honestly and to the best of their ability.

10 PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MUSEUM OFFICER TO THE EMPLOYING AUTHORITY

- 10.1 A museum officer may enter into agreements with individuals or organisations to provide professional services, provided that the contracts or agreements do not contravene the principles of ethics laid down or implied in this Code, are performed outside museum time and provided such right of private practice is in accord with museum policy, and is approved by the director.
- 10.2 Fees for short articles, speaking engagements and similar public relations exercises done in museum time may be appropriated by the officer's museum. Fees for publications and lectures prepared and presented entirely in private time may be retained by the museum officer.
- 10.3 Confidentiality, stipulated or implicit, should be faithfully observed subject to any legal obligation to inform the police or the Coroner (e.g. in cases of suspected stolen property or a natural history item which appears to have been obtained in contravention of protective legislation).
- 10.4 The museum officer has a special responsibility to respect all personal confidences contained in oral history or other personal material.
- 10.5 When acquiring any museum object, an officer should ensure that there is a clear understanding made between the owner or agent offering the object and a qualified officer of the museum. The owner must be supplied with a written receipt confirming the agreement made, and fully detailing the transaction and the nature of the object and its condition. Before agreement is reached, full consideration should be given to the ability of the museum to provide good care of all object. Any conditional reservations by either party must be plainly stated before the object is purchased, exchanged, donated or deposited on loan. In the case of purchase, the price in full must be plainly stated.
- 10.6 The museum officer shall pay full attention to ensuring the best possible security as protection against theft in display, working or storage areas, against accidental damage when handling objects, against damage in transit, and to the provision of adequate insurance cover especially for objects in transit and for loan items, or other objects which are not owned by the officer's museum but which are its current responsibility.
- 10.7 No object should be deliberately or misleadingly identified or valued, to the benefit of the museum and the detriment of the donor, owner or previous owners.
- 10.8 No object should be wrongly valued by a museum officer in order to acquire it for the museum collections.
- 10.9 No object should be taken or retained on loan with the deliberate intention of improperly procuring it permanently for the collections.
- 10.10 When a new appointment to a museum is made, the person being appointed may be called upon to sign a statement to the effect that he or she would not continue in any collecting activities which would conflict with the interest of the museum.

Some museum officers do have their own collections, whether specialist or general, of material which is commonly found in museums. Officers must always make known formally their interest in private collections of material of a kind represented in their own museum and before making any addition to such private collections either by purchase, donation or collecting, must first offer the item to the museum.

- 10.12 Where a museum officer has a declared private collection, no item from the museum collections should be appropriated, even temporarily, to a personal collection for personal use of officers, their families, or close associates. This also applies to all members of governing bodies.

11 PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MUSEUM OFFICER TO HIS OR HER COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

- 11.1 Museum officers have the obligation to share their knowledge and experience with their colleagues, and with scholars, students or collectors in relevant fields. They should show their appreciation and respect to those from whom they have learned and should present without thought of personal gain such advancements in techniques and experience which may be of benefit to others.
- 11.2 Museum officers must share expertise and information relating to research on the collections of the museum, both in dealing with inquiries from the general public and by co-operating wherever appropriate in the dissemination of their knowledge.
- 11.3 In making information or material available, the museum officer should ensure that the recipient is aware of any copyright or other legal condition.
- 11.4 Museum officers have an obligation to publish the results of their research within a reasonable time.
- 11.5 Museum officers should allow bona fide researchers full access to any materials in their care, even when this is the subject of the officer's own research or special field of interest.
- 11.6 Museum officers should respect the research area of other bona fide researchers who are actively working and publishing in that field.
- 11.7 Museum officers should respect the boundaries of the recognised collecting areas of other museums and should avoid collecting, borrowing or purchasing material with special local connections or of special local interest from the collecting area of another museum without due notification of intent.
- 11.8 The museum officers' relationships with their colleagues should always be courteous.
- 11.9 Every effort should be made to foster good relations between the museum profession and members of all other professional groups with which the museum officer has contact.
- 11.10 A Museum officer should not normally volunteer adverse judgement on the qualifications and procedures rendered by another museum officer.
- 11.11 The training of personnel in the specialised activities involved in museum work is of great importance in the development of the profession and the museum officer should accept the responsibility where appropriate, in the training of colleagues.

12 MUSEUM ORGANISATION

12.1 Relations of the director to the governing body

- 12.1.1 The director should be directly responsible and have direct access to the governing body in which trusteeship of the museum is vested, and may be a member of it.
- 12.1.2 The members of the governing body should trust the judgement of the director, be loyal to the director, and give sympathetic consideration to the director's recommendations. The director must be loyal to the governing body and so act to inspire its confidence.

12.2 Responsibilities of the director

The director, under the governing body, should be responsible for:

- 12.2.1 The direction, administration, management and security of the museum, including:
 - a. buildings and grounds, plant, equipment, furniture, fittings and other property;
 - b. staff appointment, dismissal or discipline, and supervision of their work in conservation, exhibition education, research (including visitor surveys for outside organisations) and all other areas of museum work;
 - c. finance;
 - d. collections and objects on loan;
 - e. publicity and publications;
 - f. making balanced public statements on controversial and other important issues within the museum's field of interest.
- 12.2.2 Implementing the decisions of the governing body.
- 12.2.3 Advising the governing body and keeping it regularly informed on museum activities and matters requiring finance or affecting policy.

12.3 Powers of the director

- 12.3.1 In order that the director may discharge these responsibilities, the governing body should, through its normal channels and within the widest possible defined limits, delegate to the director the power to carry out these responsibilities.
- 12.3.2 The director may in turn delegate authority to appropriately qualified members of the museum staff.
- 12.3.3 The director should generally act according to established museum and general administrative practice, professional ethics, and the policy, forms and procedures of the governing body.

12.4 Relationship of the director to the staff

- 12.4.1 It is the duty of the director to see that members of the staff work under good conditions; that they be paid a suitable salary; that they be accorded proper credit for the work they do; and that they be given every opportunity for advancement within the organisation or for service in some other organisation.
- 12.4.2 In any organisation certain rules are necessary. In the establishment of such rules the director should not only consider the welfare of the organisation but also that of its employees. At no time should the director make a rule to cover an individual case which would work hardship on others. Any rule should be enforced impartially.
- 12.4.3 The staff have the right to expect loyalty from their director.
- 12.4.4 In dealing with different individuals, the director should endeavour, without bias, to have a sympathetic understanding of their personalities.
- 12.4.5 A director should show interest in the work of the staff. A director should give encouragement and positive guidance, offer help when required and devote equal time to each section of the museum.

12.4.6 A director should provide internal training courses and encourage educational institutions to offer courses appropriate to museums. The director should encourage and facilitate the attendance of staff and other interested persons at such courses.

12.5 Relationship of the staff to the director

12.5.1 The director has a right to expect that museum staff should be loyal to the director, to the museum and to the cause it serves.

12.5.2 A museum employee is responsible for the work he or she undertakes.

12.5.3 The director may ask for suggestions and advice from staff to help in reaching a decision, and staff members should respond to such requests with a full realisation of the use to which their contribution is to be applied.

12.5.4 A staff member should give advice when invited to do so, without fear of reprisal.

12.5.5 If staff members wish to offer advice in areas in which they are competent, they should feel free to do so without fear of reprisal.

13 APPOINTMENT

13.1 Members of the museum profession, when applying for any museum post, should divulge frankly all information relevant to their applications, including professional history, and the areas of collecting engaged in by family members and close associates. Such statements also should be made by members of governing bodies.

13.2 Museums must advertise clear duty statements according to public service regulations.

13.3 Selection criteria must be made available to applicants.

Museums should not hire curators or conservators without written recommendations from respected professionals in that particular area.

14 SALARIES

14.1 The director should receive the highest remuneration of all staff members.

14.2 Museum staff should be paid salaries commensurate with their specialised qualifications and experience in the work they are engaged to do, usually at the rate equivalent to a similar university position.

14.3 Museums should formulate or follow salary review policies. All salaries should be subject to annual review.

15 RESIGNATION

15.1 In tendering resignations from their posts, professional staff members, especially the director, should consider the needs of the museum at the time.

15.2 No professional person, having recently accepted appointment, shall resign simply to take up a post elsewhere that offers more money and status.

16 DISMISSAL AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

16.1 When the director's dismissal is at issue, he or she should have the right to appear in defence before a properly convened meeting of the governing body, who should provide independent legal advice for him or her.

16.2 Except where it is clearly established that the director is guilty of conduct detrimental to the museum or contrary to these ethics, termination of appointment should be by mutual agreement and as set out in the conditions of appointment. Written contracts between the employing body and the director or a curator are appropriate.

16.3 Where the director is not directly involved in disciplinary action or dismissal, the staff member affected shall nevertheless have the right to discuss the matter with the director.

16.4 Rumour should not be a sufficient basis for dismissal.

- 16.5 If retrenchment becomes necessary, preference for continuation of employment should be the prerogative of the director, who will take into account present and past contributions of the staff.
- 16.6 All matters concerning dismissal should be regarded as confidential.

17 ABUSE OF PROFESSIONAL POSITION TO FURTHER IMPROPER ASSOCIATIONS

- 17.1 Every museum officer should at all times avoid situations which could be construed as an abuse of the officer's professional position.
- 17.2 No museum officer, by virtue of his or her position, should accept any gift, or any form of reward from any dealer, auctioneer, or other person as an improper inducement in respect of purchase or disposal of museum items. The intention is that neither the museum nor the museum officer should be compromised. Where negotiations involve hospitality, the arrangement should be approved by the director.
- 17.3 A museum officer should not improperly recommend any particular dealer, auctioneer or other firm or person to a member of the public.

18 OFFENCES

- 18.1 A member of the museum profession should always conduct himself or herself in a manner which shall not bring dishonour or disrepute to the profession.
- 18.2 Serious breaches by museum officers of this Code of Ethics may lead Museums Australia to recommend disciplinary action or ultimately expulsion of individuals or institutions.
- 18.3 Procedure for expulsion of members is described in rule 11 of the Constitution and Rules of Museums Australia (added August 1994).