



ACMI Collection Strategy 2024 – 2029

The ACMI Collection comprises diverse forms of screen culture including films, TV, videogames and commissioned works. By preserving, emulating, exhibiting and sharing the collection, ACMI ensure the collection is widely accessible to both audiences and industry. The museum works to complement rather than replicate the collecting of peer institutions to share skills and undertake research – all while making our collection more discoverable online.

Contents

OVERVIEW	2
Strategy Overview and Purpose	2
ACMI Vision, Mission and Values	2
Sector Context and Collaborations	3
Collection Development Scope	3
First Nations Cultural Material	4
COLLECTION OPERATIONS	4
Acquisitive Commissions	4
Purchase and Donations	4
Acquisition Panel and Criteria	5
Access and Loans	5
Preservation	6
Documentation and Data	6
Storage	7
Deaccessioning	8
FUTURE FOCUS, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	8
GUIDING DOCUMENTS	9
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	9

OVERVIEW

Strategy Overview and Purpose

The ACMI Collection strategy 2024 – 2029 outlines the context, functions, guiding principles, acquisition and access parameters and contemporary goals and aspirations of the ACMI Collection, and is aligned with the ACMI Strategy 2023 – 2028. Subject to review in cycle with wider organisational development and strategy evolution, the Collection Strategy 2024 builds on prior strategic direction and represents a continuum for ACMI to engage with the Victorian and wider community that will evolve to meet the needs of changing audiences, industry and education.

ACMI has had a remit to collect moving image works across an increasing range of disciplines since inception as the film lending service of the State Film Centre of Victoria (1945-1996) and then Cinemedia (1996-2001), through to the establishment of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image by way of the *Film Act (2001)*. ACMI is Australia's museum of screen culture. Since the Museum opened in October 2002 the Collection encompasses diverse screen cultural forms and ACMI Commissioned works, which ACMI maintains, preserves, emulates, exhibits and makes available for research and loan. This strategy ACMI continues to build on this with renewed emphasis on embedding experimentation both within the organisation and with academic and industry partners to expand ACMI practices in Collection preservation, accessibility and engagement.

This strategy guides ACMI staff and stakeholders in collecting and collection management but also provides guidance about the Collection externally- for other institutions, galleries, educators, researchers, creatives, industry professionals, donors, students and the general public. Underpinning this Strategy is a framework of more detailed strategies, procedures and workflows focused on specific Collection management requirements. Including acquisition, preservation, access, cataloguing, data management and deaccessioning. These are more frequently updated as working practices, technologies, screen cultural forms and sector and environmental sustainability standards develop and/or change.

ACMI Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

To build a vibrant, diverse connected society of screen literate and technologically skilled watchers and players, and a thriving ecology of creative makers.

Mission

By 2028 ACMI, your museum of screen culture, will be a globally recognised hub that connects people, communities, technology and ideas to shape our futures.

Values

- > We place First Nations culture at the centre of Australian culture.
- > We continuously champion diversity, inclusivity and cultural safety.
- > We are approachable, accessible and reflective of our diverse communities.
- > We embrace innovation and learn from experimentation.
- > Our work is impactful and legible to our stakeholders and communities.
- > We actively collaborate with our industry peers, and work together with generosity, integrity, transparency and respect to achieve collective goals.

Sector Context and Collaborations

Within the context of national collections of screen-based works, ACMI has had the capacity to focus on rapidly changing forms including Videogames and Time-based Media, while maintaining a pathway for preserving a diversity of analogue and digital film and art works from a wide range of creators both professional and non-professional. ACMI does not attempt to replicate peer institutional collecting or to represent all screen culture history and practice in Australia in the Collection and works strategically to compliment the work of other institutions' across Australia with wider reaching remits, including the National Film and Sound Archive, National Gallery of Victoria and State Libraries. ACMI connects with and focuses on moving image works, videogames, digital, interactive and generative artworks, movements, moments and their interpretation in line with the Museum's strategic directions, program and partnerships.

ACMI continues to invest in the importance of shared expertise and research as well as collaboration and partnerships with the higher education sector, industry practitioners and creatives and national and international peer institutions. These collaborative and strategic approaches are both meaningful and necessary to maintaining the significance and sustainability of the Collection's development and the Museum's service to the Community in preserving and exhibiting our screen culture.

Collection Development Scope

Collection development at ACMI is guided under this Strategy by the following collecting priorities: Videogames, digital, interactive and generative artworks, artist archives, and related materials of significance to screen cultural history, creators, industry and development, with attention to state or nationally based practice and ACMI Commissions. Material may comprise objects and ephemera where the content makes up artwork or videogames' components or support hardware, represents documentation or linked items of archival merit to the Collected works or has other clear historical or ongoing value under this Strategy for ACMI's Collection. In general collecting prioritises moving image and digital formats well suited to ACMI preservation and storage resources.

Active collecting may operate in the context of community engagement and consultation to further diversify audience experience and connections to the Collection and ACMI. This is guided by or actioned with close reference to ACMI's *Reconciliation Action Plan*, *First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol*, *Gender Equality Action Plan* and *Disability & Inclusion Action Plan*.

Within the ACMI Collection there are gaps in the diversity of screen cultural practitioners, cultural moments, practices and movements represented. Some existing Materials' interpretation and recording of identifications or connection to diverse screen culture is also incomplete. Where these gaps and disconnects are identified within the development scope of this Strategy, avenues to address them will be explored.

While ACMI maintains an important body of international moving image work and local filmic social history archives, under this Strategy the priority towards this material is preservation and improvements to access, rights clarification or clearances, with priority attention to First Nations communities' access, rather than further development.

First Nations Cultural Material

The ACMI Collection contains some materials relating to First Nations people as well as materials by First Nations creators, representing both tangible and intangible elements.

This material, compared with other collections, is culturally significant but small in number. Further cataloguing and digitisation of historical material in the Collection may reveal a larger number of First Nations-related works.

Procedures related to Acquisitions, Collection, Management and Access to First Nations Cultural Materials are guided by ACMI's *First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol* and *Reconciliation Action Plan* to ensure our commitment to ICIP Rights are respected and upheld.

ACMI's *First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol* guiding principles include:

1. Respect
2. Self-determination
3. Collaboration, Consultation and Consent
4. Interpretation and Authenticity
5. Cultural Integrity
6. Secret, Sacred and Privacy
7. Attribution
8. Benefit Sharing
9. Maintaining First Nations cultures
10. Recognition and Protection

As these guiding documents outline, the cultural guidance of First Nations screen culture practitioners is central to the Museum's commitment to the celebration of their practice and increasing First Nations communities' access to their Materials within the Collection. The following section details how ACMI will undertake tasks to action these commitments in relation to our Collection under this Strategy.

COLLECTION OPERATIONS

Acquisitive Commissions

The primary method for ACMI to develop the Collection of Time-based Media art works is through self-generated and partnership driven Acquisitive Commissions for exhibition. These are defined as artworks that are funded by ACMI, or ACMI in Partnership and results in an accessioned artwork for ACMI's Collection.

Purchase and Donations

ACMI does not generally acquire items through purchase, with occasional exception for exhibition program requirements. Donations, including Cultural Gifts, from members of the public or sector creatives and industry are accepted on a limited basis where they align with the development scope of this Strategy. While ACMI appreciates the generosity of prospective donors, ACMI carefully considers

donation offers against limited available resources for ongoing preservation of materials as well as the Acquisition criteria outlined in the next section. Details of donation offers can be submitted via the Donation form provided on the ACMI website. Assessment of donation offers is required before ACMI will accept any materials comprising the offer on premises to ensure the safety of items and the health and safety of ACMI staff.

Acquisition Panel and Criteria

The Acquisition Panel at ACMI is comprised of the ACMI Director & CEO, Executive Director of Programming, Director of Exhibitions & Touring, Director of Programming, Head of Registration and Collections, Head of Finance and Governance, Philanthropy Manager and Director First Nations, Equity and Social Policy. Additional advisory panellists are sought from other departments where the material warrants or requires their review, for example the Head of Education. The Panel approves and/or ratifies all Acquisitive Commissions, Donations and other Acquisition proposals presented by programming leads and subject matter experts within ACMI. This approval and/or ratification is contingent first on the proposed acquisitions' **alignment with the Collection development scope under this Strategy** and then assessment against the following **Acquisition Criteria**:

- Clear legal title, licencing and details of provenance of the Materials is provided
- Materials are of a suitable condition for effective access and preservation
- ICIP protocols have been addressed where applicable
- Materials expand on existing priorities and strengths of the Collection
- Materials address within development scope diversity gaps in the Collection
- Materials do not duplicate well represented content in the Collection
- Materials can be acquired, stored and preserved to Museum standards within existing resources

Access and Loans

Providing access to the Collection is a core function for ACMI, focusing on ACMI's engagement with creatives, industry, education and research and the public. This is supported by provision of opportunities for audience experience and resonance with screen culture through ACMI programming, content accessible online, content accessible and playable on ACMI's Wi-Fi footprint, and resource aligned direct access to content for loan, for viewing and use on request.

Access to materials that are not available for self-directed viewing on the ACMI website; and loan requests can be made via the ACMI website. First Nations communities have first right of access to public requests for First Nations Cultural Materials in the Collection under this Strategy (see ACMI ICIP protocol) and ACMI is undertaking a wholistic Collection review to build the availability of this Material for First Nations communities as it is identified in accessioned works and works in the process of being acquired. When assessing institutional loan requests, priority is given to ACMI programming should a request coincide with scheduled programming.

Access and loan requests are managed by the ACMI Registration and Collections team, led by the Head of Registration and Collections. Artwork loans are subject to ACMI Director & CEO approval and may also require agreement from or notice to the artist. Borrowers of other materials should also be aware that materials held in the ACMI Collection are often subject to third party rightsholders and ICIP

protocols. Borrowers are required to undertake their own rights assessment and, where necessary, clear rights with rightsholders and obtain community consents where applicable before access is provided.

To preserve and maintain the ACMI Collection long term, external access to and loan of materials is also subject to fees which directly support ACMI Collection operations. These fees are levelled to support best options and outcomes for Collection materials handling and preservation. The investment made through fee payments by those accessing the Collection also provides the ability for ACMI to ensure and improve future access and engagement with the Collection.

Viewing only and footage requests for materials that are held by ACMI in analogue formats require digitisation to be provided, with rare exceptions made for selected industry and institutional peer organisations. Specific digitisation fees are charged in instances where materials are out of scope for ACMI priority digitisation. Provision of digital formats for access by ACMI supports preservation and minimises handling of often rare and fragile original formats, but also provides significant ongoing benefit in enabling ACMI to make the Materials more widely available for future access.

Preservation

Preservation at ACMI encompasses material conservation, digital preservation and best practice collection management including preventative conservation strategies. ACMI's focus on innovative Time-based Media conservation and digital preservation supports the long-term care of born digital and digitised works in the Collection. In alignment with our practices in collecting unique commission works and artists' archives, our preservation processes prioritise the care of these works within the custom built Blackmagic Design Media Preservation Lab. Designed as a hub, this space invites creators, industry and preservation specialists to collaborate while making these processes visible and accessible to our visitors. ACMI places an emphasis on film and digital preservation research and development led by the Time-based Media Conservator and team in collaboration with the Head of Registration and Collections, the wider Registration and Collections team and other subject matter experts and senior stakeholders across the organisation. As outlined previously, partnerships and collaborations with industry, education, creatives and peer institutions also play a significant role.

Best practice collection care is a continual priority, and a regular regime of preventative conservation assessments on varied samples of the Collection are to be undertaken annually under this Strategy. External experts, consultants and communities will be engaged in this process where required and where appropriate. In relation to First Nations Cultural Materials, consultation with ACMI's First Nations Committee and cultural custodians will inform preventative conservation reviews and measures to follow (see ACMI ICIP protocol)

Documentation and Data

ACMI uses a Collection Management System to identify, record and manage data, images and specifications of Collection materials, as well as track and monitor elements associated with materials including acquisition and accessioning, display activities, locations and storage, handling, treatment and conservation records and requirements, agreements, licences and rights, stakeholder associations and requirements and insurances. In data procedures and strategies ACMI adheres to sector wide standards for the management and documentation of Collections.

As the ACMI Collection functions have evolved over time differing applications to data have led to changes in data completion practices, which has led to some gaps in information available about Collection materials under current sector standards. ACMI addresses these, with relevant stakeholders where applicable and possible, when these gaps are identified. Additionally, the ACMI Collection comprises over 40,000 moving image works, acquired and catalogued between the 1940s and early 2000s. As a result, some Materials may reflect outdated, offensive and possibly harmful views and opinions. ACMI is also working to identify and highlight these instances and/or revise public facing catalogue detail where applicable under this Strategy.

Collection data made available to the public for the purposes of research and access also adheres to wider ACMI procedures which respect to privacy and confidentiality. ACMI takes all necessary steps to ensure that personal information embedded in Collection data is secure against loss, destruction or unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure and ensure ACMI meets its obligations under Privacy Legislation.

In the event ACMI discovers culturally sensitive materials within the Collection, the Head of Registration and Collections and Director of Exhibitions & Touring will work with the ACMI Senior Leadership team including the Director First Nations, Equity and Social Policy and relevant stakeholders and communities to resolve the culturally appropriate management of materials and the data relating to these materials. As outlined by the ACMI's *First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol* this may include removal and restriction of materials and associated data from public access, identification of more appropriate custodians for the material such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and/or repatriation to communities.

Storage

With an ever-increasing need to ingest, verify and maintain documentation for the born digital and digitised materials in ACMI's Collection, the Registration and Collections and ICT teams collaborate to maintain digital storage platforms both cloud, server and tape based to ensure their ongoing maintenance and back-up. Digital storage and any necessary storage back up processes and migration to address exhibition display, access expansion potentials or obsolescence risks are led by the ICT team, in consultation with the Time-based Media Conservator and team with the Head of Registration and Collections, and AV teams where required. Acquisition deliverables, while standardised to align to best practice in conservation and archiving, are subject to change with technological developments and in consultation with creators. Authentication and quality check procedures are undertaken on all materials acquired adhering to ACMI preservation procedures and standards.

For physical items ACMI has implemented a *Safety Protocol – Admissions* for materials being acquired or loaned to ACMI. This is applied in the assessment and acquisition process for prospective Collection materials in relation to hazard risks and is being applied to retrospective assessments of existing Collection materials currently in storage. ACMI maintains a range of secure on and offsite storage locations, with materials' location determined by the environment required for maintaining condition and sector wide standards and ACMI's ICIP protocol guiding principles where applicable. All temporary and Collection materials in storage are insured under ACMI policies with the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority.

Deaccessioning

ACMI deaccessions where required to refine and improve the Collection around the Collection Strategy, to address needs for or changes in the function of the Collection and to ensure the sustainability of storage and preservation resources in ACMI's Collection management. Deaccessioning proposals are prepared by the Registration and Collections team in consultation with relevant stakeholders and considered against the following criteria as applicable:

- Materials do not meet the scope of the Collection Strategy
- Clear legal title, licencing and details of provenance of the Materials cannot be established
- Materials condition prevents effective access and ongoing preservation
- Materials are identified to be hazardous and hazards are not adequately treatable
- Materials duplicate better representative content in the Collection
- Materials cannot be stored and preserved to Museum standards within ACMI resources
- Donors make a request for materials to be returned to them
- ICIP protocols and repatriation needs require the return of Materials to their cultural community or transfer to more appropriate custodians.

The ACMI Acquisition Panel reviews deaccessioning proposals before they are presented for endorsement by the ACMI Board. State Ministerial approval is then required before deaccessioning is confirmed. Such oversight is required to ensure the process proceeds with care and consideration, recognising the significance of the materials and potential for public concern or adverse reaction by Collection stakeholders in decision making. Where possible and practical, and if not precluded by the criteria against which ACMI is deaccessioning, ACMI will seek to return deaccessioned materials to donors if they can be located or move materials on to alternative Collections via gift, sale or exchange rather than disposal.

Any sale proceeds will be invested directly back into the Collection. Under no circumstances will materials be sold or gifted to members of staff, volunteers or the Board of Management.

FUTURE FOCUS, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

ACMI is pursuing a range of short- and long-term future goals under this Strategy, focused on innovations in collecting and providing Collection access. These include research and development in:

- Community self-service access to digitised materials, with aspirations to include ACMI-made contextual materials such as artist and creator talks and interviews.
- On-demand cost-recovery based digitisation and cataloguing of existing analogue Materials to sustainably augment capabilities for ongoing preservation and growth in Collection access.
- Refinement of methods for accessing software based interactive works through emulation via the ACMI website.
- Prototype experiments with AI and machine learning to broaden access to and with the moving image Collection, including through sector partnerships and collaborations.
- Using commissions to explore new ways of sustainably collecting new screen cultural forms and formats.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

- *Film Act 2001*
- Corporate Plan 2023-2028
- Technology Strategy
- First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Gender Equality Action plan
- Disability & Inclusion Action Plan
- Volunteer Policy
- Videogame Manifesto

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Acquisition:** Process of transfer of Material's title from third party to ACMI, based on an Agreement negotiation with an artist, industry entity, donor or other supplier. Materials Acquisition required to be approved or ratified by ACMI's Acquisition Panel against Collection Strategy.
- Accession:** Process of cataloging Materials on the ACMI Collection Management System under Accessioned status, follows approval or ratification of Acquisition by ACMI Acquisition Panel, Agreement sign offs and receipt of all Materials. Protected from removal from the Collection unless **deaccession** process is approved.
- Cataloguing:** The collation, input and maintenance of information that identifies, describes and provides technical specifications of Materials in the Collection and labelling for searching, access, reporting and retrieval.
- Data:** Interpretation, rights, creator, and technical information collated in process of **cataloguing** and activity records about Materials and their management tracking such as Materials display, storage, handling, movements, access, loan and **preservation** captured on the ACMI Collection Management System.
- Deaccession:** Board and State Ministerial approved permanent removal of Materials from the ACMI Collection, authorised for transfer to alternative Collection via gift, exchange or sale or disposal, return to donor or repatriation.
- Materials:** Individual cross platform, format and medium type digital and physical items which make up the Collection, including but not limited to film, video, optical discs, software, hardware, equipment, objects and artworks.
- Preservation:** Measures undertaken to ensure the permanent accessibility both physically and intellectually of Materials in the Collection. This encompasses conservation of Materials to protect or treat against loss as well as documentation and cataloguing of works to manage Materials and provide details of their cultural significance and creation.