

SAMPLE ADVISORS BRIEF

For Museum Advisors

Aims of the Museum Advisors Program

The Museum Advisors Program facilitates the sustainable development of museums in regional NSW. This is undertaken in the following ways:

- Strategically through the analysis of collections, history and community identity of the local government area and the development of strategic development plans for a museum or groups of museums in a local government area.
- Developing connections between local government and museums in a local government area and encourage cooperation within a community.
- Raising standards in museums through training, introducing best practice standards in conjunction with M&G NSW and assisting museums to identify gaps in skills and ways to meet needs in any definable area of museum practice.
- Developing projects that enliven the presentation of museums and realise their potential as a tourism and educational resource.
- Giving advice to the local government and museums on all aspects of museum practice in advance to ensure best practice museum development and presentation.
- Assisting in preparation of grants.

The attached position description may be used as a guide for Councils when developing a brief for the work of the Advisor within their local government area. A short list of consultants with appropriate regional and strategic experience is provided by M&G NSW to each applicant council.

MUSEUM ADVISORS

Summary of Position

- The MUSEUM ADVISOR (MA) will be responsible to their Local Government employer, and will report to M&G NSW at least twice yearly.
- The MA will maintain regular contact with the staff of M&G NSW, in particular the sector development team, contributing to and implementing strategies and projects that benefit regional and community museums.
- The MA provides advice and assistance to all museums in the local government area on a rotational basis. Ideally equal attention should be paid to each museum within the duration of the service.
- The number of visits and the number of days per visit made by the Advisor are to be determined with the Council considering the needs of the museums. M&G NSW suggests that the MA travel to the area for 2 days a month for 10 months of the year, generally excluding December and January.
- Upon commencement of the service, the MA is required to prepare a strategic plan or work plan for the year. This should include an analysis of each museum in the local government area including an overview of their current situation and their needs. Projects and training plans for museum workers will be developed from this strategy and opportunities for development can be identified. This plan, to be provided to M&G NSW within the first 3 months of the Service, will be an essential tool in evaluating progress of the Service.
- The Advisor will provide advice and practical assistance with:
 - writing grant submissions
 - the organisation and/or presentation of training and developmental programs
 - networking
 - policy issues
 - technical matters
- At the end of each year of service, the Advisor is required to prepare a final report to be presented to both Council and M&G NSW detailing achievements and progress of the Service and any further needs or developments to be addressed in the coming year. The recommendations will be incorporated into future agreements between M&G NSW and the council.
- Council is advised to formally introduce the Advisor to Council and to ensure the Advisor makes a formal presentation on behalf of the Museum Advisors Program to Council during the service.
- Council is advised to contribute and manage additional funds in support of the Museum Advisors Program.

Remuneration

- Advisor's fees are \$600 per day to cover their services, and their accommodation and meals. These fees are paid directly by Council.
- Advisor's travel to the region can be reimbursed by M&G NSW if a budget for this has been negotiated at the commencement of the service. Travel costs within the LGA should be met by Council.
- Funding is on a 12 month basis, subject to review of the agreed objectives by M&G NSW and dependent on continued Arts NSW funding and ongoing commitment to the Service by Council.

Organisational relationships

Responsible to:

The Museum Advisor is responsible to a nominated staff member of Council.

Liaison/Networking:

The Museum Advisor will hold an important liaison and networking role between the Council/s, the community and the museums they work with.

The position will work closely with both the staff of Council and Museums & Galleries NSW on a regular basis through monthly contact with Council and through reporting to M&G NSW.

M&G NSW will hold two meetings per year for all Advisors to facilitate networking, professional development and the strategic development of the Service.

The Museum Advisor will develop strong channels of communication with the sector, including:

- all community museums in their local government area including those managed by volunteers
- staff of Museums & Galleries NSW
- Heritage Advisor and/or Heritage Officers in their local government area
- Regional Museum Officers or equivalent (if active in the region)
- Regional Arts Development Officers and regional galleries
- staff of cultural institutions in NSW including funding bodies
- tourist officers, tourism networks and education sector representatives in the region
- networks such as the Museums Australia Chapter, RPGNSW, and similar organisations
- other Museum Advisors.

Freedom to act

The Advisor works autonomously on an operational basis, arranging and prioritising their own workloads in consultation with nominated Council representative and M&G NSW and according to an agreed brief.

Challenges

Challenges facing the Advisor will include:

- meeting the needs of a range of constituents and stakeholders
- regular travel on a monthly basis including time away from home
- distance communication
- balancing time allocation between several different groups
- working with not-for-profit volunteer organisations with limited resources and budgets, but many needs.

Responsibilities

- to work within the LGA for 20 days/year, usually in a regular pattern eg.10x2 days
- to provide advice, assistance and expertise to all community museums in a local government area and to encourage and aid in their development
- to advise Local Government on museum practice and needs and opportunities for museum development
- assist local government and the community to best present and preserve rural heritage
- to investigate future tourism opportunities for museums in the area
- provide 'best practice' advice and to reinforce 'best practice' museum skills in regional NSW
- to undertake more effective liaison between regional museums and galleries
- to provide advice on management of collections, conservation, museum strategic management, marketing and promotion, education and public programs
- to seek additional funding for projects, in conjunction with community museums
- to raise the profile and credibility of museums in the wider community.
- to provide M&G NSW with a workplan or strategic plan within the first 3 months of the annual period, and an annual report by the eleventh month of the period.

Requirements for the position

Personal abilities/aptitudes and skills:

- identify a strategic approach for museum development in a local government area
- effective project development/implementation skills
- strong organisational skills, the ability to coordinate a broad range of projects and to prioritise workloads
- advanced community negotiation and facilitation skills
- willingness to travel to regional NSW on a regular basis sometimes for several days at a time
- ability to work alone
- excellent verbal, interpersonal and written communication skills
- self motivated and resourceful
- ability to work with people from a wide variety of backgrounds

Experience:

Experience in some or all of the following areas:

- demonstrated knowledge and experience in the museum, gallery or arts administration sector
- advanced experience in a variety of areas such as collections management, strategic planning, museum education and public programs, marketing and promotion, preventive conservation, exhibition development and display, etc
- ability to instruct and/or train adults including experience in developing and presenting training programs and workshops for adults
- experience working with community groups
- experience working in regional areas

Knowledge:

- excellent museum networks and experience/understanding of both regional NSW and the operations of Local Government
- understanding of the issues relating to regional NSW
- a detailed understanding of museum practices which might stem from any museum-based discipline - ability to understand cross-disciplinary issues is essential
- knowledge of museums, galleries and cultural development in regional Australia
- knowledge of the professional development needs of volunteer-managed museum sector

Additional Requirements:

- public liability and professional indemnity insurance as required by Council (Advisors to negotiate this directly with Council)
- a drivers licence is essential (or Advisor must negotiate travel in the LGA directly with Council)