

Collections & Stories: Storyteller Position Brief (written and digital)

POSITION OBJECTIVE

Provide high level research and story writing / development skills to a regional cultural collections digitisation project.

INTRODUCTION

Museums & Galleries of NSW (M&G NSW) requires the services of four contract Storytellers to deliver written and digital storytelling content for the Collections and Stories regional digitisation project. Three of these roles will be dedicated to creating written narrative-based stories, and the fourth role will require a mix of written and digital (audio and audio-visual skills). Storyteller roles will work flexibly across the life of the project. Two Storytellers will initially commence, and then two additional Storytellers will join the team from early 2022.

The Collections & Stories website project supports the digitisation of collection objects from NSW regional museums, keeping places and galleries. Project staff will guide and curate the creation of up to 900 stories – prepared as either written short-form pieces or as digital (audio or audio visual) stories based on these objects, to publish to the Collections and Stories website. A Project Manager and Project Officer will work with M&G NSW to co-ordinate and deliver the work of the Storytellers between August 2021 and December 2022.

BACKGROUND:

In 2018 the NSW Government, through the Cultural Infrastructure Program Management Office (CIPMO), developed a holistic state-wide digitisation strategy to provide universal access to cultural collections for the people of NSW and beyond, address preservation concerns, as well as enable regional-based cultural organisations (COs) collaborate on digitisation more easily. One of the key outputs was the development of the Collections & Stories prototype website, to function in tandem with a state-wide digitisation strategy.

In late 2020 M&G NSW was awarded additional funding from the NSW Government's Regional Cultural Fund to further develop, and make live, the Collections and Stories website to function as a strategically coordinated and curated central portal for highlighting the strengths of regional collections and enable enhanced access to these collections. This phase of the project will work in tandem with the 6 regional 'hub and spoke' networks recently awarded funding through the same program. Its focus is to expand the narrative-based story-content of the Collections and Stories website and plan for its future expansion and content development.

The 'hub and spoke' approach to the digitisation of collections refers to the scenario where council run regional museums or galleries support their smaller local counterparts, which are typically volunteer run. This hub and spoke network will work together to digitise collection objects, and with M&G NSW and project staff develop related stories to be made available to the public through the Collections & Stories website.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE AND OPPORTUNITIES:

The lack of collection documentation in parts of the community museum sector throughout NSW has long been identified as a gap to be filled. Most community museums have few staff or are

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volunteer run. There is a pressing need to improve the documentation of regional collections to benefit from their importance and value. And, in many cases the knowledge attached to or embodied by regional collections is held by ageing volunteers and / or community Elders. The lack of collection documentation, and digitisation infrastructure and standards, also prevents many COs from providing online access to quality information about their collections.

Benefits resulting from digitisation and the Collections and Stories project will include:

- Significant improvement to the preservation and disaster recovery of community collections as a direct result of documentation and digitisation.
- Increased state/national/international audiences for community museums and galleries through increased online access and awareness of these collections.
- Identification of significant objects or material culture that relates to First Nations communities and fostering re/connection to these by First Nations peoples and communities.
- Community strengthening through the telling and sharing of unique and diverse regional or local stories.
- Enhanced regional tourism and visitor economy through increased promotion and awareness of regional cultural organisations.
- Increased primary/secondary/tertiary education audiences through increased access to collections, their stories and other educational resources.
- Better research outcomes resulting from access to hard-to-reach and unacknowledged significant objects and artworks.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

The following are among the Collections and Stories project's key stakeholders.

Create NSW (Infrastructure Directorate)	Funding body
Museums & Galleries of NSW	Project lead
Albury City Council – <i>Murray Region Digitisation Hub</i>	Project Partner (Hub)
Lake Macquarie City Council – <i>Lake Stories</i>	
Maitland City Council – <i>Digital Collections: Opened Minds</i>	
Shoalhaven City Council – <i>Digital Buzz: Digitising Shoalhaven's Collections</i>	
Tamworth Regional Council – <i>Endless Access – New England North West Collection Digitisation</i>	
Warrumbungle Shire Council – <i>Cameron Collection</i>	

KEY DATES AND TASKS:

2021:

- July to August: round one Storytellers recruited
- Mid-August: round one Storytellers introduced to project partners – hubs and spokes
- Late August: Storytellers commence research, draft initial stories, oversee copyright clearances
- Mid-Sept onwards: Stories edited, and copyright agreements cross checked

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- To early December: Finalised stories uploaded to website
- Early Dec: Collections & Stories website goes 'live' and is launched

2022

- Round two Storytellers commence
- January 2022 to December 2022– continuation of researching, drafting stories, checking copyright clearances, and uploading stories to website

SCOPE OF WORKS:

- Produce 200-225 stories of 150-200 words in accordance with an agreed delivery timeframe and staged payment schedule
- Liaise with project partners to research and write / produce stories
- Use electronic transfer of files and documents used to produce stories
- Ensure copyright clearance process is adhered to and documented
- Regular communication with Project Manager and Project Officer and other Storytellers to facilitate collaborative process
- Work collaboratively with the Project Manager and Project Officer to edit and publish stories
- Contribute to any related communications needs
- Contribute to the Collections and Stories Strategic Plan and Project Outcomes report

SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Proven highly developed research experience, including locating, interpreting, and analysing primary and secondary source material/s or records
- Theoretical understanding of using and interpreting historic source material
- Theoretical understanding of storytelling and story-telling approaches, including post-colonial understandings and object stories
- High level writing skills, including for varied audiences
- The digital Storyteller will have proven digital storytelling skills
- Highly developed editing skills.
- Understanding of and commitment to the small museum and gallery sector
- High level technical ability across various tech platforms
- Understanding of copyright and licence agreements
- Ability to work to fixed deadlines
- Ability to work collaboratively with a diverse stakeholder group

A fixed fee of \$45, 000 (plus GST) is offered to Storytellers, paid in stages and in line an agreed story delivery plan. The role will report to the Collections & Stories Project Manager. All stories produced by Storytellers will acknowledge their authorship and the contributions made by project partners on the Collections and Stories website. All content created will be subject to a license agreement enabling its publication to the website.

The Collections and Stories website seeks to support diverse perspectives and strongly encourages Storytellers of all backgrounds and experiences to apply, including First Nations Storytellers. Regional applicants are also strongly encouraged to apply.