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|  | Audit Committee Meeting |

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| **Author:** | **Carol Campbell, Collection Administrator** |
| **Approver:** | **Jack Crawford, Director, Corporate & Financial Services** |
| **Subject:** | **The Potential for Risk to the Art & Heritage Collection** |
| **Date:** | **25 October 2014** |
| **Purpose:** | To bring to the attention of the Audit Committee key issues currently contributing to risk factors affecting the collection. |
| **Background** | The City of Yarra Collection (approximately 830 items) consists of artworks and objects from the former cities of Richmond, Fitzroy, Collingwood as well as contemporary and public art. The collection is broad in range and held in various locations throughout the municipality. Categories include Heritage Fine Art, Monuments & Memorials, Public Art, Contemporary Art and Decorative Art. |
| **Comment:** | Current storage of the contemporary & heritage 2 dimensional artworks consists of two small rooms (at RTH & FTH respectively) which are inadequate in size, condition, security and accessibility. They possess none of the criteria normally accepted as standard storage facilities for artwork. Burnley depot, the third storage facility, contains heritage furniture which is either beyond repair or not useable. However, it also holds the overflow of useable heritage items that have no home. The depot is area is filthy, with holes in the roof and walls and is entirely inappropriate for storage.  The decorative arts subcollection, which consists of heritage furniture items, is particularly problematic in that much of it functions as both display and office furniture. As a consequence, these items are subject to undue wear and tear and much of the budget allocated to maintain the collection is invested in repairs and maintenance for this component.  The pressure on collection storage is partly alleviated by the display of artworks across the three town halls, however this is limited by the nature of the buildings themselves and their internal architectural features. This in turn puts further stress on the storage areas, further compounded by the annual round of new acquisitions. Much of the contemporary art is yet to earn its merit in terms of appreciating, resources are therefore needed to ensure its appropriate care and display.  In terms of risk, if the prevailing storage and display conditions continue, it will likely have an adverse effect on the current value of the collection, (just under $4M). Resolution of current risks should therefore focus on these areas. The areas most likely affected are the contemporary and decorative arts.  The development and management of any collection is not merely acquiring more artworks, it is a diverse process which in part includes some rationalisation of collection content, identifying what it contains, its relevance, provenance and condition. This process identifies those items that are impacting on limited space and resources and subsequently action the steps that can be take to (hopefully) avoid any unnecessary depreciation.  The above situation has been an ongoing problem for many years, however a resolution is now becoming more critical as the collection expands and develops. The management of Council’s Art & Heritage collection should, in these contemporary times, be embracing well established and accepted practices within the arts industry. |
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| **Recommendations:** | **That alternative and appropriate storage facilities, which are environmentally stable, be found to house the collection.**  **Rationalisation of collection content**  **Specialist cleaning staff engaged to monitor and treat heritage furniture**  **Development of a dedicated exhibition venue for the collection such as the gallery outlined in the recent Richmond Police Station Feasability Study.** |