



## Prince Henry Hospital Nursing and Medical Museum National Cultural Policy Inquiry

Prince Henry Hospital Nursing and Medical Museum's mission is to preserve and maintain our hospital's historical heritage that began in Little Bay in 1881.

Our Mission is to seek to preserve all historical items and continue the culture of Health care by running programs that educate the community on important health care issues. We embrace all visitors especially future generations, the elderly, and our local Aboriginal community. We honour the role our Doctors, Nurses, and others, from this Hospital who, daily displayed their professional abilities in the healing processes.

PHH Nursing and Medical Museum NSW is classed as a small Museum and along with more than 300 volunteer managed community museums and historical societies is one of the most disadvantaged cultural organisations in NSW.

Community museums and the cultural heritage they collect are not mention in the National Cultural Policy . These are the oldest and most numerous cultural organisations in NSW with the most volunteers working in sometimes run down and not fit for purpose buildings, (ours was built 1915 and is leased from the Crown Lands Department) caring for irreplaceable heritage collections which tell the stories of their communities, and they have little access to funding and support. Many of the volunteers are in their 70s and 80s and are working over 40 hours a week to keep the museum going on a non-existent budget. We wonder what will happen to the museum when there is no next generation of volunteers to take over the responsibility.

While, not classed as regional PHH Museum operates within Sydney City boundary, which limits us again as we cannot apply for regional grants. We have limited support from local council, unlike those managed by a Council and La Perouse Museum managed by Randwick Council with paid staff just 5 kms away from us.

Funding sources for our museums and collections are grants. Volunteers, mainly untrained in grant applications have to seek out, apply and acquit all grants received. Again, an unpaid time-consuming task for Volunteers. Museums and Galleries NSW grant round is minuscule and while we have received funding to train volunteers and are grateful, there are other museums in dire need for funding. In 2022 we received \$5,479 for Museum entry and Tours (volunteer run) while our maintenance was \$23, 869, clearly an unsustainable situation. Fundraising by volunteers has always made up the shortfall.

Managing a team of volunteers and human resource management is time consuming with rosters, training, OH&S issues, working with Children and Police checks etc.

We attempt to follow Museum and Galleries NSW Guidelines for best practice for collections management always trying to look at better ways to interpret and present collections, we do this by engaging and changing the perception of existing audiences, creating new audiences in the physical museum space, embracing technology which again has cost and operational implications for a volunteer run museum.

The absence of a policy and appropriate funding framework for small museums in NSW imperils our future and the security of our collection. Our museum is custodian of early 1800's examination tables, first ECG machine in Australia, portable X-ray machine for 1920s, a working iron lung and all have little insurance coverage. We are struggling to find money to digitalise Matrons Diaries from early 1800s with the rich social history of early Australian Healthcare.

Culture comes out of local stories, people and a sense of place. Most of these unique stories and their related collections are held in community museums managed by volunteers and there is a need

to support, secure their future and share their collections and stories with new generations of visitors.

## RECOMENDATIONS

1. There needs to be a National Fund that supports the protection of heritage items in our care.
  - a) funding for the preservation of items such as digitalisation, archival materials for storage of heritage items.
  - b) provide a National Insurance scheme which will ensure our collections can be valued and protected.
  - c) address Human Resource Management by funding contract Volunteer managers who can assist with recruiting appropriate volunteers with skills in Marketing, digitalisation and also linking students studying Museum management, with support for staff as well as work placement for staff at larger well-funded Museums.

The Prince Henry Hospital Nursing and Medical Museum would like to extend an invitation to visit our museum and discuss any of the issues raised in this document.

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