

Position Description

Head of Curatorial & Collections

Reports to
Responsible for
Hours
Salary

Director and CEO
Curatorial and Collections Team
0.8 FTE (ongoing)
Available upon request

At the Jewish Museum of Australia, we illuminate Jewish life. At the intersection of art and Jewish culture, our museum is a place for all people to share in the Australian Jewish experience. Through a vibrant calendar of onsite and online experiences and events, the Jewish Museum is recognised as one of Australia's leading community arts/culture organisations.

Celebrating global Jewish excellence and everydayness through an Australian prism, we inspire curiosity, conversation and play with engagement and connection at our heart. Guided by our strong belief in the power of museums to change lives, we create world-class exhibitions and programs that convey the stories of our diverse community and enhance social cohesion.

PRIMARY PURPOSE

Reporting to the Director & CEO, this role is responsible for the intellectual and creative stewardship of the Museum's curatorial, collections and exhibitions programme – leading a talented department in best practice in acquisition, conservation, administration, research, access, storytelling and engagement.

Extending and enhancing the illumination of Jewish life through visitor-centric design principles, this executive position requires a proactive, collaborative and rigorous approach and demonstrated ability to create exceptional experiences for diverse audiences across multiple platforms.

As a member of the Leadership Team, the Head of Curatorial & Collections is integral to realising the Museum's ambitious organisational objectives and promoting its values internally and externally.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Collection Management

- Develop and implement strategic, operational and resource plans for the Jewish Museum of Australia (JMA) Collection;
- Lead the progression, implementation and monitoring of the Museum's Collection Development Strategy, and other related departmental policies, with a focus on tactical and sustainable acquisitions and growth;
- Oversee the sound procedural and best-practice approach to accession, registration, documentation, care and management of the Museum's collections, archives and loans;
- Establish object conservation, location and digitisation priorities and plans to implement safe stewardship of all works in the JMA Collection;
- Assist in the preparation and support of proposals and grant applications, and engage with potential donors and other patrons to negotiate proposed loans and gifts, pertaining to the JMA Collection;

- Interact with local, national and international networks and communities – scholarly, museological and cultural – responding to loan, research and publication requests.

Exhibition & Experience Programming

- Alongside the Director & CEO and Leadership Team, steer development of the Museum's exhibition and experience program, including (but not limited to) –
 - coordination, assessment and selection of exhibition proposals;
 - initiation and progression of concepts for exhibitions, showcases and activations;
 - cultivation and stewardship of potential exhibition loans and partners (local and international);
 - development of timelines and budgets for exhibition design, production and delivery;
 - representation and promotion of program to internal and external groups, key stakeholders, media, and other audiences.
- Commission, contract and supervise project coordinators, designers, artists and other creative collaborators to fulfil project specifications;
- Oversee design, development and delivery of exhibitions (install and demount of exhibitions), showcases and activations in accordance with professional museum standards, designated timeframes, budgets and the Museum's brand strategy;
- Initiate and advocate visitor-centric design principles that focus on inclusivity and accessibility and incorporate audience insights into exhibition and experience development and iteration;
- Lead the periodic review and refurbishment of the Museum's permanent exhibitions, including regular object rotations and updates to story spotlights;
- Develop and update exhibition-related policies, processes and procedures, assuring appropriate circulation of information to other staff, volunteers and contractors;
- With the Experience & Facilities Manager, ensure high-quality operation and excellent visitor experience of the Museum's exhibition, showcase and activation spaces.

Interpretation & Curatorial Strategy

- Lead the interpretation of the Jewish Museum's collections and archives to inspire curiosity and engage a wide range of visitors in accordance with the Museum's vision;
- Champion fresh thinking and contemporary approaches to interpretation and curatorship, seizing opportunities to be creative, experimental and innovative;
- Plan, develop, implement and evaluate interpretative materials for diverse and specialised audiences;
- Advise on the creation of accompanying text, moving image and sound for permanent and flagship exhibitions, showcases and activations, ensuring adherence to Museum's brand strategy, content goals and learning and engagement objectives;
- Recommend and prioritise interpretative strategies and platforms based on audience engagement principles and contemporary museological practice;
- Collaborate with other teams to plan and manage the production of accompanying resources, including videos, audio guides and web components, to extend and enhance interpretation of the JMA Collection, exhibitions, showcases and activations.

Strategic Partnerships & Stakeholder Relations

- Initiate and maintain strategic alliances with relevant museums, cultural institutions, community groups, universities, and other stakeholders to promote engagement with and access to the Museum's collections, exhibitions and archives;

- Manage relationships and associations pertaining to collaborative research and exhibition activities;
- Alongside the Director & CEO and Head of Brand & Partnerships, contribute to the cultivation and stewardship of donor and partner relations.

Management & Organisational Responsibilities

- Establish and sustain effective leadership strategies within the Collections & Interpretation unit, monitoring work plans, and offering regular informal feedback and annual performance reviews to inspire motivation and productivity;
- Contribute to the development of holistic organisational strategies and ensure implementation of and adherence to existing Museum policies, procedures and work practices;
- Prepare and manage annual operational and project-based budgets for the Collections & Interpretation unit;
- Offer input in sponsorship, grant and other relevant funding applications, and complete all organisational reporting requirements accurately and promptly;
- Support effective internal communications by sharing relevant information with colleagues in a timely and generous manner;
- Actively participate in regular Leadership, full Team meetings and occasional Board presentations, and contribute to a collaborative and multidisciplinary culture of creativity, excellence and innovation.

Other duties

You may be required to perform additional duties that are incidental to your key duties.

OHS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

In the context of Occupational Health and Safety policies, procedures, training, and instruction, as detailed in Section 25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, members of the Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Implement preventative OHS initiatives and maintain a healthy and safe work environment;
- Assist with the implementation of OHS and Risk Management policies, procedures standards, guidelines, instructions and Risk Assessment Control Plans;
- Regularly consult with employees, contractors and volunteers on OHS matters;
- Discuss OHS and Risk Management as part of daily decision-making processes, operations and team meetings;
- Conduct and document system reviews and inspections of employees, volunteers and contractors with assistance from the OHS and Risk Management Teams, manager(s), and/or personnel;
- Confirm and/or deliver appropriate training, and ensure instruction is given to personnel allowing them to complete jobs safely and without risks to health;
- Take appropriate action to alleviate any hazardous situation, unsafe act or omission that is observed or brought to their attention and provide appropriate feedback;
- Conduct effective induction of all employees, followed by ongoing training to develop and maintain a high level of OHS awareness;
- Assist with the implementation of Return-to-Work Plans.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EXTENT OF AUTHORITY

The Head of Curatorial & Collections is accountable for:

- The calibre of their work;
- Development of quality and engaging exhibitions, showcases and activations;
- Oversight of Collections & Interpretation unit staff;
- Management of budgets under the control of the position;
- Input into the development of organisational plans, policies and procedures.

The Head of Curatorial & Collections must exercise judgment in providing professional advice to Collection & Interpretation unit staff and other Museum staff. The position requires the ability to analyse problems, identify a range of options, and apply appropriate techniques to effectively resolve problems and conflicts with minimal guidance or supervision.

The Head of Curatorial & Collections is accountable to the Director & CEO for the achievement of goals and objectives established for the position.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

The Head of Curatorial & Collections will possess the following knowledge and skills:

- Ability to establish priorities, plan, coordinate resources and manage time effectively to achieve objectives within a set timetable;
- Ability to manage and motivate employees, participate in employee development and effectively lead a team of professionals and involve professionals from other disciplines;
- Understanding of and ability to implement personnel practices related to employment awards, equal opportunity, occupational health and safety and employee development;
- Highly developed IT skills including proficiency in the Microsoft 365 software suite.

PREREQUISITES

- You are permitted to work in Australia and can provide evidence on request;
- You will hold and maintain a Working with Children Check (or agree to obtain one prior to appointment), nominating the Museum as your employer;
- You permit to undergo a Police Check at the commencement of your employment at the expense of the Museum. Your employment at the Museum is subject to the satisfactory outcome of the Police Check.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Qualification in museum studies, art history, curatorship, arts management, and/or other related area study;
- At least five years' experience providing departmental or institutional leadership within an arts/cultural, educational or community organisation or relevant field;
- Demonstrated experience in developing and implementing collection management principles

and processes to a high professional standard;

- Demonstrated proficiency in planning, delivering and evaluating creative and innovative exhibitions and experiences that are audience-led and purpose-driven;
- Strong understanding and appreciation of Jewish history, life and culture;
- Thorough understanding of and experience using KE EMu or similar collection management software;
- Excellent knowledge of the arts/culture and community sector and confidence in establishing strong partnerships and collaborative opportunities;
- Proven competence in team, project and budget management, meeting targets and timelines, and resolving challenges to respond to organisational needs;
- Excellent administrative, interpersonal and written and communication skills including the ability to liaise confidently with staff, volunteers, government agencies, community groups, media and other key stakeholders.