Collections Council of Australia

Guide to Collections Mapping

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WHAT IS A COLLECTION?

A collection is a group of items that are related, and are preserved and managed on the basis of that relationship. Collections can be objects, documents, photographs, artworks, digital files, scientific data or objects, living plants or animals, or many other things. Collections are usually maintained because a person or group has determined them to be historically, artistically, scientifically, socially or spiritually significant.

The nation's collections are central to the Australian sense of identity and are at the core of community life. From the long history of Australian Indigenous peoples to the recent history of migration to the country, and the emergence of electronically networked global communities, our collections represent the essence of the past, present and future memory of the country; they shape our psyche, record our diversity and development, provide insight into our national spirit, and inspire us for the future. They relate to Australia's environment, history, technology, science, culture, innovation and creativity, and include contemporary as well as older materials.

Australia's collections are widely distributed. They can be found in community, corporate or civic spaces; in scientific and educational organisations; and also in the private sector. They may be brought together under different names such as archives, galleries, libraries and knowledge centres, museums, Indigenous cultural resource centres and keeping places, historical societies, visitor centres and heritage places.

Collections are composed of things that may be movable, or fixed in location. These things may be real and tangible, or may exist in digital format in a virtual realm. Botanical and zoological collections may include living things. Together, Australia's significant collections are considered to represent a 'distributed national collection'.

Library, gallery and museum collections in Australia contain more than 116 million items including:

- in libraries, 8.8 million heritage items and 52.8 million items of lending and non-lending library stock, and
- in galleries and museums, 52.5 million specimens, objects and artworks.[1]

There are more than 665,900 metres of archival holdings in the state and national library and archive collections, including 36,800 metres in libraries, and 629,100 metres in archives.[2]

Why 'collections', instead of archives, galleries, libraries and museums?

The Collections Council of Australia (CCA), uses the term 'collections' to refer to the distributed national collection, held in a diversity of organisations. The CCA works with the four key domains in the collections sector, usually identified as **archives**, **galleries**, **libraries**, and **museums**. These collecting domains also incorporate a great

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[1] The Collections Council's primary source for quantitative data about the collections sector is the Australian Bureau of Statistics 'service industry' data collected in 2004 (*Public Libraries - Australia 2003-2004* - ABS Cat. No. 8561.0), and in 2008 (*Museums - Australia 2007-2008* - ABS Cat. No. 8560), supplemented by information available from the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities and the Australian Society of Archivists.

[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2005, *Public Libraries - Australia 2003-2004*. Canberra, (ABS Cat. No. 8561.0).

number of other kinds of collecting organisations, including Indigenous cultural resource centres and keeping places, historical societies, visitor centres, heritage places, zoos, botanic gardens and herbaria. The four domains have diverse needs and unique issues, but there are “commonalities of purpose and need associated with the collection, preservation, study and presentation of the nation’s heritage”[3].

[3] Dunn, Anne (2007) ‘The Dunn Report: A Report on the Concept of Regional Hubs’, Collections Council of Australia. pg 17.

WHAT IS COLLECTIONS MAPPING?

Collections mapping involves the gathering of information about collections in a particular region, with a view to recording, planning and working strategically across the region, in order to support the care and use of those collections.

Collections mapping projects in Australia and overseas have gathered information about:

- Facilities: including storage, security, public spaces and access;
- Professional Resources: staff education and training, outreach programs, policies and standards, cataloguing and indexing, IT and digital resources;
- Financial considerations: funding sources, governance, visitation, ticket pricing;
- Collections: strengths and weaknesses, common themes, preservation needs, relationships with other collections and organisations, and other matters.

The mapping of such information enables regional and inter-regional comparisons of services and facilities, whilst providing an indication of well-managed facilities and those that need improving. Such mapping projects have been used to determine funding priorities (English Archival Mapping Project 1999-2001), to identify gaps in knowledge and produce recommendations to assist in future research and development of collections (North West Regional Archive Council 2002) and to gather a summary of the depth and scope of the collection (National Library of the Czech Republic Conspectus Project 2005).

Collections mapping can be tailored to any scale, and can be done across a single organisation, such as in the National Library of the Czech Republic, or an entire country, as in the case of the English Archival Mapping project. It can provide an understanding of the strengths and development needs of collections, and can be used to inform collection management policies and conservation and acquisition priorities.

Collection mapping can also happen across regions along thematic lines. The South Australian Medical Heritage Society is an example of this. Initiated in 1984 by two retired medical practitioners, the Society records information about historic medical objects kept in public and private collections in South Australia. Their goal is the listing and documentation of these objects. They encourage medically themed exhibits, and facilitate some loans between institutions. Awareness of these objects, collected and managed in diverse circumstances, can help ensure their preservation for the future, and encourage valuable collaboration on research and exhibitions.[4]

Collections mapping can useful in prioritising resources or encouraging collaboration. It can be a tool for identifying commonalities of purpose and need. It can also get the community talking about their needs, and generate valuable mutual awareness.

In *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections*, authors Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth describe the distributed collection of material relating to the Kelly Gang. The story of Ned Kelly and his gang has captivated Australians for generations, and has inspired art, literature and films. The collection includes pieces

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[4] More information about the SA Medical Heritage Society is available at http://www.samhs.org.au/.

of armour held in libraries and museums, records of Kelly's arrest and imprisonment held in archives, and artistic representations of Kelly and his gang in art galleries.

Understanding of Kelly and his historic, social and artistic significance is enriched by considering all of these objects and records, across the boundaries of the individual collections or domains that care for them[5]. Collections mapping is done best if it reaches across traditionally separated collecting domains. This will lead to new connections and new understandings of collections, which will help inform their management and use.

The next sections will explain these and other benefits of the collections mapping process. See Appendix A of this booklet for examples of collections mapping and related activities.

[5] Russell, R and Winkworth, K *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* 2009, pp 5-7

WHY DO COLLECTIONS MAPPING?

Collections mapping can increase knowledge about collections activity in a certain region or context, and can identify previously unknown resources and activities. It can give those involved in local history, heritage, tourism and cultural planning a fresh perspective on activities, and can break down traditional ways of looking at the sector (narrow focus on single organisations or single domains). It can help identify gaps or duplication of services, and improve the efficiency of the use of existing resources.

The resulting map can be traditional cartographic map of the region, with this information marked upon it, or an online or electronic map that might be able to show layers of information, depending on the query of the user. The map may be a traditional map, features of which refer the user to more expansive information in another format.

In a regional context, collections mapping can help determine:

- Resources
- Training and professional development needs
- Historic, cultural or scientific themes of the region, which can help
    - Inform collection development policies,
    - Create communities of interest, which will assist research and encourage collaboration, and
    - Determine priorities for preservation, digitisation and other investment in local collections.

The map may become an authoritative account of the extent and capacity of collections across the region, the work hours contributed by staff and volunteers and the economic contribution of those collections. This summary is useful for advocacy for the collections sector, which is generally perceived as a community good, but is rarely evaluated in this way.

Many small to medium-sized regional collecting organisations rely on limited resources and the hard work of committed small numbers of staff. Some rely entirely on volunteer contribution. Thus it is important that these resources are put to the best use in a manner that is targeted and effective. The map aggregates data about diverse collections, which can be used in a strategic way so that strengths, weaknesses and opportunities can be considered and addressed.

The Dunn Report, commissioned by the CCA in 2006, identified the challenges and needs of regional collecting organisations, drawing on thorough consultation with organisations, professionals from the collections sector and peak bodies. The process of mapping a region's collections, and the resulting map, should lead to powerful advocacy tools for a region's collections and those who care for them.

Finally, the process of mapping collections, if done in a personalised, community-centred manner, can be enormously empowering for those collections being mapped. Throughout history mapping has been seen as an authoritative and administrative process, enforcing boundaries, property, even nations and cities. Over the last forty years, mapping became increasingly democratised, and a means for empowering communities. Chris Perkins, in his article 'Community Mapping' explains that "People in theory now have the tools to create their own maps and express their own mapping skills. Community mapping plays a significant role in this process. It might be defined as local mapping, produced collaboratively, by local people and often incorporating alternative local knowledge"[6]. He explores some of the potential of community mapping, including re-asserting indigenous people's rights, re-mapping lost place names, protecting local wildlife, conserving landscapes among other uses. That list includes "showing the powers-that-be what might be locally distinctive"[7].

Mapping collections is an excellent opportunity for the community to determine and promote what is locally distinctive. It can also help those collections ensure they are focused on the locally distinctive, gather evidence for the significance of their collections, and ensure that their collecting organisation is working in ways that value and celebrate that significance. The mapping process has the potential build communities of interest and useful networks, and to inform strategic plans for participating organisations and for the region as a whole.

From *The Dunn Report*:
Collections hold the historical evidence from which communities build their understanding of Australian values and identity. In every community there are vital stories, based on these collections, to be told. These stories enhance regional identity and strengthen communities. The people telling these stories are committed to the future of these communities. The combined help of governments and all collecting domains is now needed to make these stories a valued part of the national history.

There is an urgent need to provide facilitation for communities to:
- Identify their themes and stories
- Bring people together to see how their collections can support and enhance these themes and stories
- Bring in skills and expertise to assist communities to manage, preserve and develop these collections

In addition, regional decision-makers generally do not understand and recognise the value of these collections to assist in meeting their own objectives of:
- Strengthening communities in a changing regional landscape
- Developing regional and local identity
- Building economic capacity
- Learning about and preserving the natural environment
- Acknowledging local Indigenous history

[6] Perkins, Chris "Community Mapping" in *The Cartographic Journal* Vol 44. No. 2 pp 127-137, The British Cartographic Society, 2007.
[7] Ibid.

STAGES AND STEPS OF COLLECTIONS MAPPING

This guide outlines the stages and steps of the collections mapping process.

Some international examples of collections mapping have used a “top-down” approach, in which the data collection and mapping is managed by an overseeing committee/ organisations, removed from the community they are studying. In this guide, the CCA has developed a “bottom-up” approach, where communities initiate the mapping process, which may be led by a coordinator, but where widespread involvement and support is essential. The mapping exercise is designed, executed and evaluated at a regional level, thus allowing this ‘collections mapping guide’ to be versatile and useful for every community.

A community reference group established to oversee the mapping can bring together a knowledge bank that will prove invaluable. It can also ensure that the process includes representatives of diverse domains and organisations, and can encourage endorsement by diverse groups from the relevant community.

Relationship building and comprehensive data gathering are very important parts of a collections mapping project, but can be time consuming. In practice, mapping may take up to twelve months. Some aspects of your map that can inform planning and determining priorities for action will emerge sooner, and the data can be interrogated for different purposes throughout the process. However, it is important to plan to realistic time frames, especially if dependent on volunteer labour, and a comprehensive strategic plan for collections in a particular region may take twelve months to finalise.

Steps and stages of the collections mapping process, including a toolkit of useful templates, are outlined in the remainder of this guide. The guide is intended to be a versatile resource, and mapping may be conducted under different circumstances in different regions. If you have a paid staff member leading the process, or resources from a local collecting organisation, council, shire or other contributor, some of the steps will progress more quickly than is described here. You don’t have to read every stage and step in detail before getting started, skim the whole booklet, and then read each stage carefully as you approach that phase of the project. Take what you need from this booklet, and feel free to modify the steps and stages to suit your region.

Good luck!

Stage 1: Getting Started
Generating support, determining objectives and parameters, and gathering resources.
Step 1: Organise a regional meeting to generate interest and support for Collections Mapping; The First Meeting
Step 2: Determine the scope, objectives and limits of the project
Step 3: Resources and Timelines

Stage 2: Gathering information
Research and data collection.
Step 4: Preliminary research
Step 5: Data collection
Step 6: Preparing to collect information

Stage 3: Creating and using your map

Synthesising, making sense of and using the results.
Step 7: Collating the results
Step 8: Matching Data with Objectives
Step 9: Converting the Data into a Collections Map
Step 10: Analysis and Interpretation

Stage 4: Promoting Your Results
Reaching out to the participating organisations, media, policy and decision-makers and the community.
Step 11: Getting the word out
Step 12: Media coverage
Step 13: Celebrate!

STAGE 1: GETTING STARTED

Step 1: Organise a regional meeting to generate interest and support for Collections Mapping

Relationships with those working in collecting organisations and other interested stakeholders will be key to the success of the project. An important first step is to organise a community meeting to generate interest and support for collections mapping. It is important to invite those working in existing collections and stakeholder bodies, as those people can provide an overview of the known strengths and needs of the region. In addition to this, an open invitation may attract volunteers interested or working in collections that have not previously been identified and can offer new perspectives.

An open inaugural meeting promotes an atmosphere of collaboration and approachability for the project. It can also nurture a sense of ownership in the community. Be creative in finding the people to invite to this first meeting. Local schools and universities might have small archives, and local churches almost certainly have historic collections. Contact local government, or peak bodies such as the Collections Australia Network, Australian Libraries Gateway, Museums Australia or others to ask about local collections that might not be immediately obvious.

You should also take the opportunity at the first meeting to ask attendees to nominate others who may be interested in participating in future meetings, taking advantage of existing informal networks.

Who should I invite to the first meeting?

- Staff and volunteers from local archives, galleries, libraries and museums
- Staff and volunteers from local Indigenous Keeping places or cultural centres
- Staff and volunteers from local zoos, botanic gardens and herbaria
- Local historical societies
- Managers of local National Trust properties and other heritage sites
- History and heritage workers from local councils or shires
- Local representatives of State or Federal Heritage, Arts or Environment departments
- Staff and volunteers from local visitor or tourist centres
- Community groups and associations (this may include the RSL, Scouts or Guides, churches, sporting clubs, service clubs, Freemasons, women's organisations, multicultural, migrant and refugee organisations, amateur art or theatre groups and others)
- Representatives of local indigenous communities
- People who look after historic collections or archives in local churches, hospitals, schools and other educational institutions (including vocational education and university campuses)
- Any other local community members who may be interested or able to help the collections mapping process.

Advertising the first meeting
You might also like to advertise the first meeting, to attract other interested people or representatives of the community who might not be obviously involved with collections. Feel free to use **Template 1: Advertising Leaflet** to publicise your

meeting, by photocopying and filling in the blanks. The templates are also available for download from the CCA website (www.collectionscouncil.com.au).

If you have the resources, it might be a good idea to place an advertisement in your local newspaper.

TEMPLATE 1: Advertising Leaflet

This advertisement could be circulated on relevant email lists, displayed on local noticeboards or posted directly to identified collecting organisations in your region. It could also form the basis for a newspaper or online advertisement. Your local council might be willing to display a short paragraph promoting the meeting on their website, or as part of their regular advertising in local newspapers. Your local newspaper may also promote the event in a section dedicated to free community announcements or listings, or even a short article.

COLLECTIONS MAPPING PUBLIC MEETING

……………………………

You are invited to a meeting to discuss collections mapping in …………………… on ………………….. (date), at …………………….. (location), from ……………….. (time).

WHAT IS COLLECTIONS MAPPING?

Collections mapping gathers information about collections in a particular region, with a view to recording, planning and working strategically across that region, in order to support the care and use of those collections.

It can identify training opportunities and generate ideas for collaboration between collecting organisations. It can help the community identify, document and promote collections in…………………(region)

This is an opportunity to work together on our strengths and weaknesses, improve care and exhibition of our collections. Your participation is crucial to the success of the process.

Come along, share information about your collections, and meet a group of like-minded people working and volunteering in collecting organisations around the region. Share your wisdom, and learn from others to improve all of our collections.

DETAILS

Date:
Time:
Venue:

Please RSVP to …………………………………… by …………………….. (date)

If you are interested in collections mapping but cannot attend this meeting, please be in touch, as there will be other opportunities to be involved.

The first meeting

You may need to conduct more than one meeting to plan collections mapping, and to determine the objectives and parameters of your map, the availability of resources, publicity and promotional campaigns.

It is a good idea to arrange a welcome or introduction by a prominent, well liked local supporter – this might be the Mayor, a local celebrity, the director of a large local cultural institution or someone else.

The meeting will need a facilitator or chair, which might be a project worker or the initiator of the event. The group also needs a scribe to record the discussion at the meeting. It is important that notes are taken and circulated after every meeting, so people know the ground that was covered. This doesn't need to be the same person at every meeting, it could be a rotating volunteer role.

Discussion points for the first meeting may include:

- Introduction to collections mapping
- The importance of community participation
- Briefly describe successful collections mapping examples (Australian and international) and talk about the potential uses of collections maps
- Identify attendees who are interesting in participating in data collection or collation
- Identify and record interested collecting organisations
- Identify any known collecting organisations that are not represented at the meeting
- Call for volunteers for a Steering or Advisory Committee to work on the project (depending on how many people are interested)

The collections mapping project will benefit from the contribution of representatives of diverse organisations, and from diverse areas. This will help improve networks of collecting organisations in the area, and also provide valuable volunteer labour for the project.

It will also help ensure that the project will be responsive to the needs and interests of the community, and that the results will be valued and relevant.

Tips for a successful meeting:

- Give everyone an opportunity to have their say or ask questions. Be aware of people who may have not spoken or who may appear to have unexpressed concerns or questions and invite them to speak.
- Keep presentations short and to the point. A couple of brief, clearly explained examples of what you are talking about can help people imagine the potential of the project.
- Try to ensure that the group talks and provides input, preferably for the majority of the time.
- If possible, include small-group tasks, encouraging the group to interact with each other.
- Anticipate problems or issues of concern and have a plan for how to handle them.
- Be positive! You are trying to generate support for your project.

Steering or Advisory Committee

A call for volunteers for the Steering or Advisory Committee may be issued at or before the first meeting, so that people are prepared to consider the invitation. If you have a large number of people who are interested, this Committee can form a core leadership group that meets more frequently, and contributes more focused time to the mapping project. If attendance at the first meeting is low, the Committee might be everyone who is interested. If the project is being led by a local council or particular organisation, this Committee may play an advisory and support role for a project worker. If the project is entirely volunteer run, the Committee is likely to be making decisions and implementing each phase.

Over the course of the project the Committee might seek extra members to provide particular expertise or just to boost volunteer capacity to get things done!

Responsibilities of this Committee may include:

- Determining the parameters and objectives of the collections map, with advice from those present at the first and subsequent collections mapping meetings
- Contacting local collecting organisations and distribute surveys or conduct interviews (in the circumstances where the project is volunteer run – if the project employs a worker, this may be part of their role, or they may seek volunteer assistance)
- Guiding the development of a Regional Collections Strategic Plan
- Determining priorities for action within the plan
- Encouraging support for collections mapping in the organisation and domain that they represent.

Tips for planning with a committee:

- List major tasks. This can include clusters of related smaller tasks
- Decide on realistic deadlines
- Check for any interdependencies between tasks (i.e. where one task must be completed before another can begin)
- Assign responsibility for each task to a different person, and encourage regular updates on that task, and the formation of working groups, if necessary, until that person reports their task as completed.

Step 2: Determine the scope, objectives and limits of the project

Successful project planning depends on all participants having a clear understanding of parameters and objectives. Collections mapping may occur within a certain region, or along thematic or organisational lines.

In the context of *CollectionsCare*, the parameters will be regional (i.e. normally a cluster of local government areas). Circumstances and resources will determine the limits of the mapping parameters. Distance may necessitate creative solutions to enable to participation of collections on the fringes of a region. The core group of collecting organisations within a region may feel special affinity with related organisations that are outside the specified region, or even within another state. In the interests of representing the reality of those collections' work, experience and resources, such connections should be included.

Parameters will also depend on your objectives. The coordinator of this project needs to know if the objectives will be better met by focussing on a smaller region. The team may want to consider mapping the region in stages, focussing on distinct geographic regions or thematic regions in segments. To ensure the comprehensive success of the mapping project it is important to take stock occasionally, check that the parameters remain relevant, and make sure that the results are not influenced by your own pre-conceptions about collections within or outside of those parameters.

The size and nature of the region can be flexible to meet needs and objectives of the project.

Compile a list of objectives

Early meetings, of either the whole group of interested people, or the Committee, are an opportunity to determine the breadth and scope of the region, and the objectives of the mapping project.

Recognising the input of interested representatives of collecting organisations is part of planning for success.

The Committee or project coordinator needs to consider the question:

'**What do we need to know?**'

"The overriding objective may be to gain greater knowledge of the resources present in the municipality so as to assess needs, networks and strengths. In that case the inventory should be organised along the lines of gathering data about who, how many and their mutual dependence".
Cultural Mapping Toolkit p16

"…ask community members to identify themes that are important to them – the things they believe make their community unique. These could relate to a town's historic street scape; a tourism resource such as a beach, forest or natural heritage area; the impact of natural resources on the region (is it a wine or wool region for example?); or the history and influence of indigenous or ethnic groups in the area"
G. Young *Mapping Culture* p. 24

Discussion at these early meetings will be more productive if the group is given some starting questions. These should not be restrictive, but can keep the brainstorming discussion focused.

Questions that may be posed in the meeting include:

- What and where are the collections within our Region?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of our collections?
- What resources are we using, or do we have access to? This includes buildings, IT facilities, paid staff and volunteers, friends' groups, relationships with local government or other local non-collecting organisations, state or territory based outreach programs, funding programs and other resources.
- What areas are in need of urgent attention?
- What are the major themes that run through the collections? What do the collections say about the region? What is unique about our region?
- ………………………………………………………………………….
- ………………………………………………………………………….

The meeting should also address practical questions about the project, including:

- Determine the source(s) of funding for the mapping project.
- How will the map be updated and at what intervals?
- What resources will we need?
- What form will the map take? Will it be visual? Can it be web based? Can it be used for promotional/tourism needs or for emergency management purposes?
- ………………………………………………………………………….
- ………………………………………………………………………….
- ………………………………………………………………………….

Insert your own questions into the lists above, and make sure that you are open to questions arising from the assembled group. The contribution of the group at this meeting is one of your greatest resources – they are your knowledge base!

The group should also begin thinking about **'Who needs to know?'** The format of your map and how information is distilled from it will be decided later, but knowing your eventual goals can help you design the data collection.

Step 3: Resources and timelines

Good project planning depends on a realistic assessment of the resources at your disposal. The resources that can be dedicated to the project will depend on the circumstances in which it is conducted. In a *CollectionsCare* region, the *CollectionsCare* Coordinator and regional hub will oversee, and commit time and technical resources to the project. Many local governments will approach collections mapping as an opportunity to maximise the value of their investment in the region, and thus may be willing to act in a coordinating role.

Some regions or collecting organisations will approach collections mapping on a volunteer basis, in addition to their regular work. In each of these circumstances the project team must have a realistic measure of their resources.

Human Resource considerations may include:

- Project management and administration
- Data collection
- Data entry
- Collation and analysis
- Map design
- Communication and public relations

The mapping project will be more successful if the project leader **doesn't** work alone. This will help them manage their workload, and will also help ensure community investment in the project, a broad range of perspectives, and a good relationship with the project team. Diversity of input can ensure that approaches and perspectives remain fresh, and can lead to ideas and initiatives that can break down silos and improve collaboration in the region.

Financial considerations will depend on the environment in which the mapping is being conducted.

Budget considerations may include:

- Meeting expenses – room bookings, catering, some travel expenses
- Communications – telephone and internet use
- Design – depending on the planned final format of the map, this may include design or drafting of a map, preparation and printing of a final report, or website design
- Depending on the size of your project and financial resources, wages may be considered for interviewers, researchers or data entry.

TEMPLATE 2: Assessing your resources

What do we have?
The group should brainstorm what they can contribute to the project. Start with the simple things, which will help you pinpoint the more specific things you or your organisation can contribute:

- How many volunteers? And how much time can each contribute?
- Does the group need a leader or leaders?
- Do we have a meeting space that we can use regularly?
- Do we have access to a computer? A telephone and internet connection?
- Is someone willing to be a contact person, to answer questions about the project?
- Who are our local allies (large collecting organisations, local government, prominent supporters etc)? Can they contribute in-kind support?
- Is there a local grant or funding program that can help us with any of these things?
- Do we have extra people we can call on for the most labour-intensive part of the project (interviewing or collating responses to questionnaires)?
- Does anyone in the group have experience designing questionnaires or interview questions?
- Do we have a place where we can keep the projects' files and records? (This might be an online space such as wiki, or a desk or room in someone's workplace or home)
- Do we have an appropriate spokesperson for the project? This should be someone who is a confident public speaker. If someone in the group has had training in working with the media, they will be the ideal spokesperson.
- Are there universities whose students might have experience with research planning and generating maps?
- ……………………………………………………………………………………
- ……………………………………………………………………………………
- ……………………………………………………………………………………

What do we need?

- Meeting space
- Telephone and internet connection? Do we want to set up a contact email address for the project?
- Catering for public gatherings and meetings? Do we want to do this ourselves? Can we get support from a local business?
- ……………………………………………………………………………………
- ……………………………………………………………………………………
- ……………………………………………………………………………………

If you are interested in applying for a grant for collections mapping, the outcomes of this discussion can inform a draft budget. See Appendix B for a draft budget template.

Timelines

It is important that everyone involved has a realistic understanding of the time that collections mapping will take. The project will benefit from careful progress, and the information gathering is not something that can be rushed.

Both the mapping process and local collections may be partly or entirely dependent on volunteer effort. Those coordinating the process need to acknowledge that participants who volunteer to conduct interviews or collate data may be adding this to pre-existing volunteer commitments in their collecting organisation.

The duration of your project will depend on the size of the region, the collections being mapped and many other factors. Don't be surprised if it takes twelve months to gather all of the relevant data. Remember to create an opportunity for community feedback on a 'final draft' of the map.

Issues that should be considered when planning timelines for the project include:

- Historical societies, museum committees or other volunteer groups may meet monthly or less frequently, so letters or emails may not come to their attention until at least four, or sometimes eight, weeks after they are sent;
- Some volunteer groups break their meeting schedule over the Christmas/New Year period, and many break for school holidays, as members have other commitments;
- Collecting organisations that are open to the public may find that the Christmas/New Year period, and other school holiday times are their busiest, and volunteers may need to devote all their time to attending the organisation and assisting visitors;
- In regional areas, harvest and planting times and other seasonal factors may prevent participants' involvement at certain times of year;
- A twelve month plan makes it possible to participate in regular community events and festivals, providing opportunities to promote collections mapping and identify collecting organisations that have not yet been contacted.

Each community will have diverse factors to consider, including the size of the region, the determined objectives of the mapping project, and the resources (staffing, funding and in kind) able to be dedicated to the project.

Momentum can be maintained in the project by the release of findings or interesting facts as they emerge. These can be circulated particularly among the Committee and attendees of the first meeting, but can also be publicised with media releases (See Stage 4: Step 12).

Planning your timeline.

The timeline will differ for every mapping project. Factors that will influence your timeline include: whether someone is employed to work on the project, how many volunteers are participating, how many collecting organisations there are in the region, distances between and frequency of contact with collecting organisations in the region, whether there are existing networks that you can draw on, and whether people can visit the collecting organisations that are participating, or whether your group will conduct all communication over the phone or by email or post.

How frequently can the Committee meet?
It is good for the Committee to meet monthly, to set individuals or small working groups tasks that will be reported on at the next month's meeting. Decisions will be made according to those reports.

Some individuals' or small groups' tasks will be completed within the month, and some will continue throughout the project.

The timeline on pages 23 and 24 has been designed for a group of volunteers. If the project is being led by someone who can work on this in their regular working hours, some elements may happen faster.

Keeping up community interest

An important part of maintaining community engagement in the project is quality communication of outcomes as they emerge. This guide has earlier described the importance of community support for the project. In order to maintain that support, participants must feel that benefits are beginning to emerge.

Regular basic updates on progress reassure local participants and supporters of the value of the project. This can take the form of email updates, a simple newsletter or occasional media releases as interesting, useful or quirky observations emerge.

TEMPLATE 3: Timeline

This timeline is only a rough guide. It will help the group understand the scale of the project in the early stages, but the actual timeline for your project will depend on available resources, number of workers and other local factors.

Stages and Steps	Estimated Time
Stage 1: Getting Started Gathering support, determining objectives and parameters, and gathering resources. **Incorporating:** **Step 1: Organise a regional meeting to generate interest and support for Collections Mapping** **Step 2: Determine the scope, objectives and limits of the project** **Step 3: Resources and timelines**	**Approximately ten to fourteen weeks.** **(first public meeting, plus one or two monthly meetings)** • If you are establishing a Committee it should meet within a fortnight of the first public meeting about the project – keep that momentum and enthusiasm going! • Establish working groups of pairs of people within the Committee to lead certain tasks or small clusters of tasks. They can report back on progress at each meeting. Some tasks will be completed within one or two meetings, some will continue through the project. • Brainstorm the resources that are available to the project, and start identifying needs. • Brainstorm the question **'What do we want to know?'** at the first meeting. This wide-ranging conversation will inform the scope and limits of the project and start building your framework for data collection. Remember to take good notes of the whole conversation. • Distribute those notes at or before the second meeting so that the Committee can stay focused, and to trigger new ideas that may not have arisen or may not have been recorded from the first meeting. • Have a realistic conversation at some point in the first two meetings to talk about timelines and people's capacity to work on the project over an extended period.
Stage 2: Gathering information Research and data collection. **Incorporating:** **Step 7: Preliminary Research** **Step 8: Data Collection** **Step 9: Preparing to collect information**	**Approximately twelve to sixteen weeks.** **(three or four monthly meetings)** • Preliminary research should happen over the first twelve weeks of the project, and will help inform all stages. • Designing the survey or interview structure will take longer than you think! Brainstorm and discuss the data you are trying to collect, then a person or working group should be responsible for creating the

	questionnaire or interview from that discussion. They should present their draft to the next meeting, but give everyone a month to think about it, test it and provide feedback. High quality questions and a well thought out questionnaire will make the collation of data easier and the results richer. • Think about whether you can recruit extra volunteers for the data collection process. Extra interviewers or people to make phone calls and chase outstanding questionnaires will help keep the project moving.
Stage 3: Creating your map Synthesising, making sense of and using the results. **Incorporating:** **Step 10: Collating the Results** **Step 11: Matching Data with Objectives** **Step 12: Converting the Data into a Collections Map** **Step 13: Review, Analysis and Interpretation**	**Approximately sixteen to twenty weeks.** **(four or five monthly meetings)** • Start processing data as it arrives, then you can keep track of emerging trends and refine the best way to collate the data over time, rather than being swamped at the end of the process. • Have an open and friendly discussion about what the map will look like as you collect the data. Different people in the Committee might have creative ideas about how to represent the information. There aren't any silly ideas, and don't feel confined to a typical geographic map. Bring print outs of different kinds of maps to a meeting to talk about the group's vision for the project, and trigger ideas. • Remember to include collecting organisations' strengths on the map, rather than just the needs. This can be a great way of suddenly seeing undiscovered opportunities!
Stage 4: Promoting and using your Results Reaching out to the participating organisations, media, policy and decision-makers and the community. **Incorporating:** **Step 14: Getting the Word Out** **Step 15: Media coverage** **Step 16: Celebrate!**	**This can take as long as you like!** • This part of the process will depend on the findings of the map. • Immediate areas of need should be addressed quickly to ensure the wellbeing of the collection. • New opportunities for collaboration should be acted upon reasonably quickly, to take advantage of the positivity and momentum of the mapping project. • Other connections and findings might emerge over time, or might be pointed out as the community and other outsiders view the map for the first time.

Tip to keep the project moving forward:
In a long project that might depend on volunteer labour, it is important to keep track of achievements each month to make sure that you are making progress!

As explained in Step 1, working with a committee can benefit from breaking the project down into tasks and assigning responsibility for each task or small cluster of tasks to individuals or working groups. These people should report back on their progress at each meeting. If there is no progress in a particular month, that person or group might need extra helpers, or might need the group to help them review their task, to see if it can be approached differently.

STAGE 2: GATHERING INFORMATION

Step 4: Preliminary Research

The first stage of any collections mapping exercise is to conduct some desk research. Your preliminary research should aim to **identify collections** in the region, sketch out **historic and cultural themes**, and formulate a brief **demographic profile** of the area. This is intended to be research at an overview level, as more information about every one of these issues will emerge as mapping progresses. This research should be conducted merely in order to identify potential project participants, and inform the discussions in which those people will take part.

1. Identifying Collections.
Starting points might include:
- Internet searching tools such as Google
- Tourist maps of the area
- Local Government websites

The next basic step is to use existing contacts to identify collections. These may include:
- State/Territory and Local Government heritage workers
- Collections Australia Network
- Peak bodies (examples include Museums Australia, the Australian Society of Archivists, Australian Library and Information Association, the National Trust in your state or territory, your state or territory representative to the Federation of Australian Historical Societies)
- Staff and volunteers at the local visitors' centre
- Relevant museum/gallery assistance programs, (examples include Museum and Gallery Services Queensland, the WA Museum Museum Assistance Program, Museums and Galleries NSW, History SA)
- Universities and TAFE colleges that have a presence in the region

Remember to be creative when identifying collections. Many local institutions such as schools, churches, sporting clubs and hospitals will have historic or archival collections, usually managed by volunteers or staff whose primary role is not collection management. In small communities your best resource may be the staff and volunteers of collections that you have already identified. They may be aware of hidden, or even 'lost', collections in their local community, and be able to suggest avenues to explore.

2. Historic and Cultural themes.
A more thorough survey of the region's historic and cultural themes will emerge as the collections of the region are mapped, but your identification of collecting organisations and available resources will be helped by having a broad understanding of historic themes of the region.
- What are the major industries in the region?
- How and when were local towns established? Is it a mining region? Agricultural region? Is there a significant local employer such as a manufacturer or large landholder?
- Is the region known for any particular historic event?
- Are particular ethnic or cultural groups prominent in the region? When and why did they come to this region?

- Are there local societies or clubs that could help identify the history of the region? (As well as local historical socities, information could be sourced from groups such as the Freemasons or Lions Clubs, church based organisations, groups for persons from particular ethnic backgrounds and others).
- Who are the traditional owners of the region, or local Indigenous groups?

These are starting questions, and it is not necessary to answer all of them before commencing collections mapping, but a broad understanding of local historic and cultural themes will help inform your initial investigations and questions as you map local collections and related resources.

3. Demographic profile.
Local government can help you with a snapshot of the demographic profile of the region. If you are unable to source information from them, the Australian Bureau of Statistics produces regional profiles. This information can be useful to ascertain the largest towns within a region, the population profile, including age range, family size, languages spoken and nature and size of the Indigenous and other multicultural communities.

Step 5: Data Collection

The easiest way to create an inventory of information regarding your regional collections is through collection of data by consultation, interview or survey.

The inaugural meeting and your background research should give you an adequate number of collecting organisations to begin gathering this information. Creating a standard questionnaire or interview plan will help you ensure that you get consistent information about every collection or collecting organisation.

A reference group with representatives of the collecting organisations involved may help decide the format of this data collection. Options include surveys and/or interviews, simple multiple choice answers or qualitative questions.

Remember to assess your resources when designing the data collection form and the scope of your interviews. Your resources will determine how complex your data collection process may be. Keep in mind your overall goals and themes whilst developing the form, as well as the objectives you listed in Step 2. Interviewing and analysing qualitative answers to questions can mean a significant investment of time.

If resources and volunteers are limited, the Committee might like to stage the data collection process, commencing with a simple survey to collect baseline data, then doing targeted, more in-depth consultation over time. The baseline data, including organisation names, contact details, size and collection type will be enough to create a preliminary collections map. The information on that map will help you decide the next step.

The group organising the data collection must also remember that interview or survey subjects must give informed consent, and there may be privacy considerations for individuals or organisations. Ensuring that consent and permission for re-use of material is clear at this stage will save time later in the project, when you may wish to use quotes or case studies from your research in publicity or advocacy based on the resulting map.

Questions to think about before you start:

- Do you have adequate human resources to undertake the data entry?
- Does your budget allow for the development of a database or several databases to hold this information?
- Where will the data collection forms be stored and for how long will they be retained?
- How will you synthesise subjective information?
- Would it be better to seek simple baseline information at the first stage, then ask deeper questions in follow up questionnaires or targeted sample survey groups?

It is very important that those working on data collection consider and have consistent approaches on the following issues:

- Interview or survey subjects must give informed consent, and must not be exploited;
- Privacy considerations for individuals or organisations;
- Cultural sensitivities when working with multicultural communities or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Protecting interview subjects' and organisations' intellectual property rights;
- Security of collections.

Step 6: Preparing to collect information

The management of information is a sensitive issue, the seriousness of which cannot be understated. The committee and project leader must be confident that:
1. they have the capacity to collate and store data from the survey
2. they are prepared to responsibly manage data from the survey.

Designing a Questionnaire

Designing a quality questionnaire or interview structure that elicits the information you need can be challenging. It is important to be clear about your goals. It might be useful to enlist the help of someone in your community who has experience in social research, market research or statistical surveys.

The questionnaire should use simple language that will be easily understood by respondents. It should appear uncluttered and any instructions should be straightforward, minimal and simply explained. The order of questions should be designed so that the respondent feels that the questionnaire flows logically.

The kinds of information you are seeking will influence the types of questions you ask. Different kinds of questions and their strengths and weaknesses are discussed below:

Closed questions:
This category includes
Limited choice response: questions that ask the respondent to select a yes/no answer
Multiple choice responses: questions that ask the respondent to choose one of a number of possible responses
Checklist questions: questions that ask the respondent to check one or more responses from a specified list.

This category also includes 'partially closed questions', where any of the models above has a final alternative of 'Other, please specify'.

This type of question is the simplest, quickest and cheapest to process, and will usually result in *quantitative* statistical data (example: '95% of collecting organisations in the region are open to the public', or 'the majority of collecting organisations in the region have no paid staff').

Producing this kind of statistical data implies a high quality survey sample size. This means that you have either surveyed *all* collecting organisations in the region, or a sample group that is large enough and appropriately selected to ensure that results can be extrapolated to accurately represent the region.

Open questions:
These allow respondents to answer questions in their own words. It will result in more *qualitative* data. These questions can be a good way to identify unanticipated issues, as they are less directive than closed questions, but they are more difficult to answer and to collate. Open questions can result in powerful anecdotal responses that may enliven your mapping results. They may also result in 20 wildly diverse answers from 20 respondents that are impossible to gather into a meaningful observation. It should also be remembered that open questions can be interpreted differently by respondents, and by those processing the results. Drawing together the results from open questions is time-consuming, and you must be confident that the results will be useful.

Testing of your questionnaire should indicate whether your open questions are likely to be a problem.

Tips for designing a questionnaire:

- Use direct language, and the active voice, rather than the passive voice (example:. 'the president of the historical society is to complete this form', rather than 'this form is to be completed by the president of the historical society').
- Arrange clauses in chronological order within sentences (example: 'read the instructions and then fill in the form', rather than 'before you fill in the form, read the instructions').
- Keep sentences short and convey each piece of information in a single sentence.
- Test your questionnaire on people who have not been involved in its design, difficulties will quickly emerge.

Gaining consent and permission to publish

Direct quotes from questionnaire responses or interviews can bring your data and map to life.

Clarifying consent and permission issues at this early stage is easier than trying to arrange it later when you are interested in publishing the results.

Chapter 2.2 of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*[8] explains that 'the guiding principle for researchers is that a person's decision to participate in research is to be voluntary, and based on sufficient information and adequate understanding of both the proposed research and the implications of participation in it.'

In order to satisfy this principle, your questionnaire should be accompanied by (at minimum) a letter explaining the anticipated benefits of the research, how responses will be stored and used, and any risks that may be involved. Ideally, for the permanent record, you should ask the participant to sign a consent form, that incudes permission to publish their comments. If you are circulating a questionnaire, your cover letter can explain that return of the questionnaire infers consent and permission to publish.

The consent form should indicate that responses may be published in a variety of formats, and should specify how they will be attributed to the respondent. If you feel that questions are very sensitive, you could indicate that responses will be aggregated and separated from individual respondents before publication. If you wish to directly quote the respondent, this should be mentioned in the form.

The respondent should be absolutely certain if and how their name and the name of their organisation will appear in any documentation or publicity of the project, before they start answering the questionnaire or before the interview starts. You might like to offer the respondent the option to allow quotations from their questionnaire or interview, but remain anonymous. A sample permission form is provided at Template 7.

The permission form should also indicate how responses will be stored. The principles of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* explains that consent should indicate the form in which the data will be

[8] http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/ethics/2007_humans/section2.2.htm

stored (especially in relation to whether individual respondents will be able to be identified) and how it will be used.

Collating and managing data

As you begin, you should also think about how you will manage the resulting information. This includes the physical storage of returned questionnaires, or recordings or notes of interviews, and the collated data generated by those consultations.

In the process of obtaining consent from participants, you will need to make some assurances about the security of their personal information, and an assurance that it will be used. Support can dry up if people feel that they won't see the results of the project. They have contributed time and effort to your project by providing you with thoughtful answers, and must feel appreciated.

As collections mapping can be a useful record of the resources and collection within a region, responses form a useful snapshot that should be preserved for future comparison.

1. Long term use of collected data
These surveys or interviews will gather a picture of collections in their region, their condition and resources at a certain point in time. If it is logistically possible (see restrictions on storing questionnaire responses and other data below), all the mapping documentation should be stored for future reference.

2. Security of data
It is best if returned questionnaires or records of interview can be kept in a secure archive. This generally means that they should not be kept at someone's home or in an area accessible to the public. While they are being used, they can be kept in an organisation's office, and once relevant data is collated, they can be lodged with a local archive (perhaps one run by the local council), or destroyed if you are not confident they can be kept securely.

TEMPLATE 4: Consent agreement for use of information

COLLECTIONS MAPPING
CONSENT FORM AND PERMISSION TO PUBLISH

Please complete and sign this form if you wish to give permission to be surveyed/interviewed to contribute to a collections map of ……………………… and if your comments may be published. The consent form may be returned with your questionnaire or handed to your interviewer.

I, …………………………………………………………………………………………

agree to be interviewed/surveyed for the collections mapping project in ……………..

I understand that participation in the survey involves an interview or questionnaire and the purpose of the survey is to gather data on collecting organisations, their resources and collections in ………………… , in order to develop a map of this data.

I acknowledge that:

1) The aims, methods and anticipated benefits of this collections mapping project have been explained to me in the covering letter.
2) I voluntarily and freely give my consent to participate in this questionnaire/ interview to develop a collections map.
3) My organisation will be named in a list of participants.
4) Data will be held securely and confidentially
5) I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event participation in the survey will immediately cease and any information obtained will not be used if I so request.
6) Results will be used for research purposes and will inform the creation of a map of collections in …………………
7) If I grant permission by checking a box below, my comments may be quoted in the report/map and attributed to me.

Please tick one:

☐ **I agree to have the information I contribute and comments I make in the context of this questionnaire/interview attributed to me in any report that may result.**

☐ **I prefer to remain anonymous. Any information or comments I contributed in the context of this questionnaire/interview are not to be attributed to me in any report that may result.**

Signature:………………………………………………………………………

Date:………………… ……

TEMPLATE 5. Sample Questionnaire or Interview Framework

Some suggested questions for information gathering are provided below. You do not need to include all of these questions.

Your first questionnaire or interviews might just want to collect organisational baseline data, which will give you an understanding of the number and size of collections in the region.

Follow-up questionnaires or interviews might ask selected questions from the second or third boxes. The scope of the questions will depend on the outcomes of your discussion of objectives (Step 4). Feel free to add your own questions.

ORGANISATION Organisation Name:	
Address:	
Post Code:	
Contact Name:	
Position:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Email:	
Classification: (eg. Archive, gallery, library, living, museum, hybrid – see definitions in glossary)	
Do you have paid staff? If yes, please explain (eg. 2 full time, or 1 full time, 2 half time, etc)	
Do you have volunteers? (Please state how many)	
How many volunteer hours each week are contributed to your organisation? (This can be an approximate or average amount)	

COLLECTION AND FACILITIES Describe the primary focus of your collection: (eg. Visual art, social history, natural history, scientific, documents, industrial history, books, botanic garden, herbaria, or others)	
Describe the size of your collection: (This can be metres of document or archival holdings, or number of objects. This can be approximate)	
Does your organisation have a computer? (Yes or No) How many?	
Does your organisation have a telephone? (Yes or No)	
Does your organisation monitor the environmental conditions of its collections? (Please provide details)	

Is your organisation connected to the internet? (Yes or No)	
Does your organisation have a website? (Yes or No, please supply the address)	

OPERATIONS Is the collection catalogued? (Yes/No/ Partially (please specify an approximate percentage))	
In what format(s) is the catalogue? (Digital, paper etc.)	
If digital, what software do you use?	
Is the catalogue available online? (Yes or No)	
If yes, where? (own website, Collections Australia Network, local council website)	
Are parts of the collection or the whole collection exhibited? (Yes or No)	
Is the collection available for research or consultation by the general public? (Yes or No)	
Are digitised images or scans of individual items from the collection available? (Yes or No)	
If there is restricted access, to whom is access allowed?	
How many visitors do you have each year? (Please specify a number, which can be approximate, or indicate that your organisationdoes not record visitor numbers)	
If you have a website, how many 'hits' does it receive per month?	
Does your organisation run education or holiday programs for children? If yes, please describe how frequently, and how many children visit?	
Does your organisation participate in or oversee any annual festivals or other acitivities?	
Has your organisation worked with local, state or territory support services? (eg. Local council history/heritage officer, Museums and Galleries NSW, History SA, National Archives of Australia training, Museums and Galleris Queensland, professional organisationsetc)	
Does your organisation run education or research programs, or internships for students?	
Does your organisation have an emergency or disaster plan?	
Do you know of any other organisation(s) with a collection that complements this one? Please give the name of the organisation.	

I confirm these details are correct:

Name:	Signature:
Position:	

STAGE 3: CREATING AND USING YOUR MAP

Step 7: Collating the Results

Your objectives, and the design of the data collection template or form will shape the type of results you receive.

Ideally, your results will contain several layers of information. It may be helpful to consider them in the following categories:

- Factual/ Baseline data (i.e. who, when, what)
- Responses to principal interview questions
- Red Flag items – Collections needing immediate attention, unanticipated responses, or significant gaps in information.

These categories will be used in Step 9 and 10.

Step 8: Matching Data with Objectives

Once the raw data has been collated it is appropriate to revisit your objectives and assess whether the data you have gathered has answered these questions, as well as providing the inventory to create a collections map.

It may be helpful at this point to produce a draft 'collections profile' based on the information you have. This profile should complement the initial background research and help identify your collection values and themes. You may need to review Step 7 and how data was gathered and collated if there are a large number of unanticipated themes, or if elements from your preliminary research are completely missing from your aggregated data.

You may want to present a preliminary report to your reference group that can include:

- Tables, charts or maps showing the baseline data
- Emerging issues and themes
- Bibliographic listing of resources informing the report

Step 9: Converting the Data into a Collections Map

There is no limitation to the styles or number of maps that you can create from your data. You may lay the information gathered over a standard map of the region, either on paper, or electronically, if you have the resources. There are many online electronic maps that could help you develop a cartographic representation of your data. Use your imagination, there are many different ways to visually represent your findings, and a creative approach will illuminate and animate the data you have collected.

Before creating the visual and structural components of the map, you may wish to make list(s) detailing:

- The types, size, resources, statistics about collections in the region;
- how they complement, compare or otherwise relate to each other;
- the impact of each individual collection upon the overall themes of the distributed regional collection;

- the degree of detail that you wish to include; and
- the number of maps needed to adequately address the needs of the region.

Ask yourself if there are any gaps in what is being represented. Do you need to conduct more data collection before you create your map?

When developing your collections map it is important to remember that the principal difference between an inventory of information and a map is the identification and depiction of relationships in a visual manner. The map will animate the inventory of data, making it a much more powerful tool for planning and advocacy. The Committee may be able to involve an artist, graphic designer or visual communications expert to assist in creating the map.

Mapping your results
The **factual/baseline data** can be captured on a simple map of the region. All further responses enrich that basic data.

Responses to principal interview questions will add features to your map. This may mean indicating size of collections by different symbols, or progress towards digitization with different colours. You might like to characterize different types of collections (art/ social history/ natural history/ living collections etc) with different pictographic representations.

Red Flag items can determine immediate priorities for action. This might include an urgent need for conservation of a particular object or collections, or compelling connections that emerge between two or more collections. It might be unusual or unexpected positive stories that could attract the attention of funders, decision-makers in the community or the media. Stories attached to these red flag items can add interest to public presentations about the map, or funding applications and exhibition proposals.

Step 10: Analysis and Interpretation

Once your map starts to take shape and drafts are being produced, you can begin the process of drawing conclusions on the state of your collections and then testing the validity of your findings within the region.

Review and Analysis
It is important to review and test your findings. In this, as in many stages of collections mapping, involvement of local collecting organisations, and their representatives are your greatest asset. Consult with this community. Do the map's findings ring true? Are the emerging observations reflected in their own experience? Is there a pressing need that isn't represented on the map?

While consultation is important, and can offer new perspective on the map at this stage, be cautious in acting on what arises from this consultation. Check late information against your objectives and data before adding it. You do not want findings distorted by the agenda of small special interest groups.

It can help to have a firm agenda, clear objectives, and confidence in your rationale when presenting information to the community, in order to control discussion.

Interpretation
There are levels of information that can be drawn from your map.

Useful information that may emerge as you create the map includes:

Distribution of collections throughout the region.
At minimum, your map should detail minimum baseline data about collections in the defined region. This data includes location, type of collection, size of collection and/or organisation, and the level and type of resources.

Overviews and urgencies
As you map data, common threads should emerge. Some strengths and needs in the region will emerge, allowing you to make recommendations.

Gaps in training or resources.
Mapping may reveal obvious gaps or concentrations of resources. In the basic data collection process you may also have identified collections that are in urgent need of assistance, whether that be financial assistance, professional development or mentoring.

Observations may emerge that local staff and volunteers are very good at documenting their collections, but would appreciate some computer training, or some help preparing for digitisation. It may be discovered that half the region has excellent emergency preparedness plans, while the other half has none. A museum may have a high quality scanner that it is willing to lend to a local historical society that has a desire to digitise their collections, but has been confounded by a lack of technical resources. These observations can help with planning of training across the region, and also encourage helpful partnerships between organisations.

Connections between collections throughout the region.
Mapping may uncover connections between collections in the region that are useful for nurturing collaboration, and that increase the efficiency of individual collections. These connections might reveal opportunities for research and tourism in the region. They could also help each organisation develop priorities for research, exhibition, digitisation and other projects.

Opportunities for growth throughout the domains
As we gain a picture of the region as a whole, natural strengths and weaknesses will emerge. Strengths may lead collecting organisations and workers in the region to focus on specialities, or interested parties may focus on improving areas of weakness in a collaborative, communal manner. Knowledge about thw activities of one collecting organisation may raise awareness of gaps and opportunities in other organisations.

Opportunities for linking in with other maps (e.g. cultural, hazard, tourism, emergency management)
The relationships that the project has created will lead you to awareness of other maps of the region, and commonalities may emerge.

Cultural mapping includes data about intangible heritage, performing arts and cultural practice. Overlaying the collections map onto the cultural map is another opportunity to promote collections and build relationships in the community.

Communities interested in disaster preparedness may like to compare their collections map with maps of hazards or natural landscapes. Many local government or emergency response organisations manage a municipal disaster plan. They may appreciate input from your collections map, to help them identify collections, buildings or sites of local significance.

STAGE 4: PROMOTING YOUR RESULTS

Step 11: Getting the Word Out

The purpose of the collections mapping exercise is twofold. It can inform and enhance the work of those who are already supportive of collections - local collecting organisations, heritage practitioners, local government and service providers – by improving efficiency and maximising investment in the collections sector. It can also be a powerful tool to convince others about the importance of caring for collections, the scale of the sector, and local achievements in the region.

Your existing supporters may include those who have had input to the project, local heritage and tourism authorities and those who work with collections.

Be aware that you may encounter resistance to mapping in some of these groups. This project will broaden people's perspective beyond their own collection, and they may need to be convinced of the value of doing so. Also, traditional boundaries between domains, and between funded and volunteer-run organisations might mean that some are reluctant to support the project. Sometimes resistance might just be self-consciousness about an organisation's own areas of need. Re-stating the value of the map, including its potential to identify training and development opportunities, can help boost support.

Your broader target audience, including local authorities, commercial interests and the general public, may not be receptive, but may be convinced with targeted communications, aggressive marketing, and a positive celebration of the completion of this landmark exercise.

Your research and mapping will have generated a wealth of information, which is useful to different parties in different ways. Don't make the mistake of simply publishing all of the accumulated information and expect others to find what they need. Audiences' interest needs to be engaged, and relevant points need to be drawn out and 'packaged' in a way that speaks to them.

Revisit your map. What strengths did your research reveal in the region? Did unexpected historic or cultural threads emerge? Where were the gaps? Consider who will be interested in these issues.

After discussing the resulting report and map with your reference group, the first publicity step should be a press conference and unveiling event. Ensure that this event is well-attended by supporters, and invite local councillors and parliamentarians, local media, any funders or other supporters who have provided resources, community groups and other locals who can broadcast news of your success.

The unveiling could lead to further events, such as presentations to local councils, shires, state or territory government representatives, issues-focussed media releases, public talks, articles in local newspapers, focus pieces on local collecting organisations' or other relevant websites in the region.

A visual representation of the map can help you gain publicity for the project. This can help illustrate the concept, and convey simple information quickly and approachably. This map should not include all of the information gathered, but should draw out key points relevant to what it is being used for. This might mean developing several maps, or even commissioning a striking illustrated version of the information from a local artist.

Also remember that your research is rich with case studies, examples, anecdotes and charming quotes. If you have permission to publish them (see Step 6), they can be used to enliven your presentation of the data, and can help connect with your audience. If it is possible, show respondents how their quotes appear in your report. By doing this you can be confident that you aren't misrepresenting anyone, and it also helps respondents feel proud of their feature role in the project.

Some suggestions for using collections mapping information to promote collecting organisations in your region are below:

Statistical data about volunteers:
Your map should show concentrations and achievements of volunteer run organisations. It might also expose collections that could benefit from the input of experienced volunteers, who are willing to work for more than one organisation.

Documentation of their work could prompt rewards for volunteers in the region tied in with National Volunteer Week. Approach your local council, or state or territory based volunteering agency, who might be looking for a good news story. This could bring the attention of the media, and consequently, the public, to your local collecting organisations, and the invaluable work of local volunteers.

Connections to Australian Historic Themes:
Did any stories, notable items or collections emerge that appear very significant in relation to Australia's historic themes? This could be especially valuable if it ties together several items across collections. Some themes may emerge that invite further research, you may even uncover objects or collections that should be included in the Australian or International Memory of the World registers.

Collections to be included in tourism trails:
Did you come up with results that can connect with existing local tourism trails or themes? Did you find that trails emerged as themes popped up in different collections? You could provide a summary of important local collections or objects to the local tourism authorities, or present an informative talk to the staff and volunteers of the local visitors centre, which will help them guide interested visitors to local collecting organisations.

Opportunities to build links with local events:
Themes may emerge in your collections that connect with local festivals or events. Tying exhibitions, programs or special events within your archive, gallery, library or museum can be a great opportunity to increase visitor numbers and improve the profile of your organisation.

Examples of this include the collecting organisations in the Western Australian Goldfields planning exhibitions about mining and the life and experience of local miners to coincide with the Festival of St Barbara, patron saint of miners. This local festival includes a miners' memorial service and a street parade supported by local mine operators and attended by thousands.

Similarly, South Australian winemakers celebrate the vintage each year at the Barossa Valley Festival. This could be an opportunity for historic collections across the region to celebrate winemaking pioneers in the Barossa, or showcase photographs and artefacts from earlier Barossa Valley festivals.

These are only some of the many opportunities that will emerge from your collections map. Be creative, and discuss these opportunities with the local reference group. The data that is revealed by the map might spark ideas and lead to collaborations that will enrich the local collections sector.

The Dunn Report explains that one of the potential barriers to the success of regional *CollectionsCare* hubs is the "low priority often given to cultural programs in general and especially collections by local government decision makers" (p.26). This is an opportunity for collections to be celebrated, and your collections map offers a solid basis on which to build a vibrant local collections sector.

Step 12: Media coverage

The media might have attended your first meeting. Once you have gathered and anaysed some or all of the data, you might find that you have a story for them. You might actually find you have *many* stories!

Media releases are an effective way to draw attention to the findings of your map. This can be a great opportunity to promote the collections in your region. You can announce the launch of your collections map, or you could plan a series of timed releases, each drawing out some exciting piece of information that has emerged from the mapping process.

Remember that journalists receive hundreds of releases every day, and you'll need to make yours grab their attention. You should have plenty of fascinating news from your map, so make the most of it.

You might have contact details for local journalists or media representatives who attended your first meeting, or you can obtain email addresses or fax numbers from local newspaper, radio and television station websites. If not, don't hesitate to call and ask, they will usually be happy to tell where would be best to send your information, and that phone call is another opportunity to promote your map. Try to target the local media in each part of the region covered by your map.

Lastly, don't forget to call on your supporters. A large collecting organisation in the region, or the local council, might have a media officer who is willing to help you write and distribute your media release.

Tips for an eye-catching media release:

- The two most important parts of your media release are the headline and the opening paragraph. Be creative, and make sure you get your best material upfront. If these first lines don't grab their attention, the journalist will move on to the next announcement.
- Keep sentences short and direct, and try and limit your media release to one page.
- Get your key messages – WHAT, WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW – in a short first paragraph.
- The body of the media release should be a mix of statements of fact, and quotations, and should explain your key messages further.
- Add interesting quotations, which can make your release more lively, and add a human face to the news.
- Make sure the news sounds really local, add mention of local personalities or landmarks if possible, events, or significant, well-known aspects of local history.
- Make absolutely sure that you have included all the FACTS – WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHO, WHY and HOW – and include a contact telephone number.
- Be positive and upbeat – even if you are commenting on the urgent conservation needs of collections in the region, or the lack of volunteers, tell the story in a way that highlights the amazing potential of those collections if their needs were met.
- Think carefully about who should be the spokesperson– it must be someone who is available to answer calls, preferably on a mobile and possibly out of normal business hours, and someone who is enthusiastic and can confidently speak about the project. If someone involved in the project has media experience or training, they might be the best spokesperson, or might be able to coach the spokesperson.
- Proofread your release and read it aloud; any errors will quickly show up.
- Have some background information ready, including information sheets, good quality photographs, and have a few people on standby in case the media photographer wants extra people for a shot at the local museum, archive, library or heritage site.

TEMPLATE 6: Sample Media Release

INSERT YOUR LOGO OR LETTERHEAD HERE

(*INSERT DATE*) - **Media Release – For immediate release**

Catchy heading (e.g. See what's on the .... collections map!)

Everyone in (INSERT REGION) is invited to the unveiling of a collections map at…………………………...on…………………………………, from…………………………………to……………………………………………………..

A team of volunteers has worked over the past year to map the collections in ……………………………. Bringing together data about the archives, galleries, libraries, museums and other collecting organisations in the region has highlighted the rich variety of historic, scientific and cultural collections, and the hardworking staff and volunteers that care for them.

INSERT A BRIEF PARAGRAPH ABOUT A PARTICULARLY INTERESTING FACT THAT HAS EMERGED FROM THE MAPPING (eg. How many volunteers work with the collections? Did you discover something that will be well-recognised as an important local contribution to Australian history, or a significant artwork that was previously under-exposed?)

"Collections mapping is about collecting and recording information on the variety of collections on our region. It ultimately can lead to better care and use of our valuable historic, archival, artistic and scientific collections,"…………………… said today.

"Mapping can result in identify new opportunities for collaboration, and help us train and support the hardworking staff and volunteers who care for these collections. It also is a very useful tool for the community to understand the scope and potential of their collections, and the promotion of our region."

Collections mapping depends on community involvement-so find out more by coming to the first meeting.

The collections mapping project is funded/sponsored by……………………..and is supported by……………………(INSERT ANY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS' DETAILS HERE

For further information please contact
[add name and contact details].

Step 13: Celebrate!

It is important to celebrate your achievements, whatever the scope or size of your mapping project. Your final map and report represents the achievement of a large group of volunteers, collaborators and locals who are interested in collections. Their work should be celebrated and the whole group should be proud of their achievement. Celebrating mile stones in the mapping project will allow your committee and involved community members to reflect upon their achievements.

It is also another opportunity to bring together those who work with collections, and encourage networks, community building and collaboration.

Your map can be the beginning of great things for collections in your region. Use your imagination, as this doesn't need to be the end. The results of the map or its analysis might have created new communities of interest, or opportunities to dig deeper.

Embrace these new opportunities and skills, and enjoy being part of your new community!

GLOSSARY

Archive	An organisation whose main activity is the collection, management and display of documents and records
Australian Historic Themes	This framework was developed by the Australian Heritage Commission in 2001. Drawing on earlier versions and the assistance of state and territory heritage agencies, consultants and practitioners, this research tool is used in the assessment of places for the Register of the National Estate. The framework comprises nine theme groups that help those interested in heritage to provide links between regional stories in Australia's history and the places and objects that help ullstrate that history.
Collections	Collections are a group of items that are related, and are preserved and managed on the basis of that relationship. Collections can be objects, documents, photographs, artworks, digital files, scientific data or objects, living plants or animals, or many other things. Collections are usually maintained because a person or group has determined them to be historically, artistically, scientifically, socially or spiritually significant.
Collecting organisations	This report uses the term collecting organisation to refer to the organisation that cares for collections. There are four main domains of collecting organisation in Australia – archives, galleries, libraries and museums – but many other types of collecting organisation such as historical societies, Indigenous keeping places, cultural centres. Collections also may be kept in organisations that do not have collecting as their primary business, such as local councils and shires, schools, hospitals, universities, government departments and many more.
CollectionsCare	*CollectionsCare* is a model of supporting regional collections and collecting organisations that involves a staffed hub. More information can be found at **www.collectionscouncil.com.au**.
Data	Facts, statistics or items of information. This is used as a broad term in this report, to describe the collected information that is generated by the mapping process.
Decision-makers	This guide uses the term 'decision-makers' as shorthand for a range of strategic and policy focussed people. Different mapping environments will need to connect with different kinds of decision-makers,

	but it can include local history, heritage and tourism authorities, funding bodies and other authorities that make decisions about the existence and capacity of collecting organisations. It can mean local council members or members of parliament, their staff and policy advisers.
The Dunn Report	Commissioned by the Collections Council of Australia in 2006, *The Dunn Report* draws on a study of the current structures supporting regional collections. It endorses the concept of 'Regional Hubs' - envisaged as a national network of regionally-based support for the collections sector - as the best means for supporting such coillections and collecting organisations, and recommends funding and operational models for that network.
Funders	This term is used in this report to describe organisations or individuals that provide financial or other support to collecting organisations. This can be in the form of grants or operational funding, or other kinds of support, such as allocating space in buildings, extending insurance to the collecting organisation, providing administrative support etc.
Gallery	An organisation whose main activity is the collection and management of visual arts and crafts, with an emphasis on display
Hybrid Collection	Main activity is collecting and managing items from more than one of the above collecting domains e.g. historical society with both archival and museum collections, 'Museum and Art Gallery'
Library	An organisation whose main activity is the collection, management and display of books and other information resources, with an emphasis on access
Living Collection	An organisation whose main activity is the management of living collections e.g. botanic garden, herbarium, arboretum; zoological garden; aquarium
Museum	Main activity is the collection and management of objects, artefacts or specimens, with an emphasis on display

APPENDIX A: MAPPING CASE STUDIES

There are very few instances of collections mapping, so the following case studies include cultural mapping, language mapping and activity mapping.

Museum and Gallery Services Queensland collections mapping

Museum Development Officers (MDO) working with Museum and Gallery Services Queensland (M&GSQ) have developed a mapping questionnaire that helps guide and measure their work. The questionnaire is designed to be flexible, and gather useful information about different types and sizes of museum, gallery, historical society and other collecting organisations. It asks questions about staffing and volunteers, policies, facilities, themes and the organisation's goals for the future. Responses to this questionnaire help the MDOs create tables that indicate themes across the region, and the progress that small collecting organisations have made towards developing a suite of policies.

More information can be sourced from Museum and Gallery Services Queensland http://www.magsq.com.au/ (accessed 30/04/2010)

UK Medical Collections Group

As they commenced development of a strategy for medical collections in the UK, the UK Medical Collections Group mapped relevant collections in museums, libraries and archives. This mapping project was conducted as a 'desk study', with surveys sent to 360 organisations.

The responses helped identify 95 collections. Half of those were focussed on medical issues, while half were part of wider social or local history collections.
The survey helped the Group gather information on how well documented these collections were, whether the organisations that cared for them had access to specialist expertise, and how accessible they were.

The map identified areas for immediate action, such as the generation of collection-level data for some medical collections that are digitally accessible, in order to make them more discoverable. It also identified opportunities for partnership.
The map provided 'base data' from which 'a strategy for medical collections will be developed by the UK Medical Collections Group'.

More information available at: UK Medical Collections Group, 'Medical &Healthcare Collections Mapping (Summary)', available at http://www.thackraymuseum.org/ukmcg.html (accessed 02/03/2010)

Archive collections in the East Midlands of England

In 2007 Museums Libraries and Archives East Midlands mapped archive holdings in their region, to form part of the MLA East Midlands Advocacy Strategy, and help with planning in local professional development programs. A questionnaire and follow-up interviews gathered data on the number of archives, their level of activity, summaries of their collections and their workforce development needs.

The findings of this mapping project elicited hard data about the numbers of archives, their level of activity and size. It also gathered data on the implementation of collection management plans, conservation management plans and the conservation needs of the collections. It provided some insight into the take-up of MLA 'best practice' programs, and the approach to volunteering in the region.

More information available at: MLA East Midlands and Jonathon Rhys-Lewis 'Archive Collections in the East Midlands', March 2007, available at http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=853 (accessed 02/03/2010).

AUSTLANG Indigenous Languages Database

AUSTLANG is a directory for Australian Indigenous languages. Initiated and managed by the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the database collates available information about Indigenous languages from contemporary and historic sources.

The database is searchable by language or place name, and can be accessed through a map, drawn from Google Maps. It locates language groups on this map, and provides layered information for each of those groups. The database includes alternative names for the language, historical referen ces to the language, known instances of documentation, the number of speakers at different times between 1973 and the present, and classifications of its usage and endangerment.

More information available at: http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/main.php

Conspectus Mapping of the National Library of the Czech Republic

After the 1989 revolution, the Czech Republic faced the challenge of improving infrastructure that had been deteriorating and neglected for many years because of isolation and limited international cooperation. The National Library of the Czech Republic found that it needed to update existing information about its collection using completely new technology, and map certain areas of the collection from scratch. In 2000 the Czech Library team employed the Conspectus collections development strategy to re-write their collection development policy.

Conspectus had been developed by American academic research libraries in the 1970s to classify and map library collections. The decisions that are required in this mapping process are a useful way for the organisation to determine and contemplate their organizational focus, as well as the breadth and depth of the collection. It has been said that the process is as valuable as the resulting product.

Using Conspectus, the Czech National Library has developed their catalogue, and has undertaken the new challenge of developing a Czech Digital Library, using the Conspectus tool on several levels to map and organise their subject orientated digital collections and address the needs of their special collections.

More information available at: http://conspectus.nkp.cz/

Mapping of creative industries' work sites in Darwin, Northern Territory

Brennan-Horley has mapped the work locations of creative workers in and around Darwin in the Northern Territory. He initiated the project in order to test the commonly held assumptions about clustered creative activity in the cities, pointing out that such traditional mapping is usually collated from census data about employment statistics. Brennan-Horley points out the inadequacies of the traditional census methodology in relation to those working in the creative industries, whose working lives are not typical, and may involve numerous sites.

Interviews with 101 individuals who work in the creative industries resulted in an average of five work locations for each person, showing a massive departure from traditional statistical data. These reported work sites were geo-referenced and mapped, and the resulting information used to draw conclusions about centres of creative work in and around Darwin, and the connections between them.

More information available at: Brennan-Horley, Chris "Multiple Work Sites and City Wide Networks: a topological approach to understanding creative work"in *Australian Geographer* Vol 41. No. 1, pp. 39-56, March 2010.

Common Ground Parish Maps

In 1985 the UK organisation Common Ground launched the Parish Map Project. Their stated goal was to support 'local distinctiveness', and the project encouraged local people to map what their own parish valued. The goals of the project can be seen as political *and* aesthetic, with participants offered guidance in map making, but standardization was avoided. Local participants were encouraged to create their own map of their own place, using local skills, and reports state that maps have been 'sewn, woven, knitted, printed, drawn, painted, filmed, animated, performed and written' and are almost universally the product of group input, rather than a single cartographer or artist.

It is estimated that by 2007 up to 2000 parish maps had been produced, with diverse features such as green lanes, vernacular names, ancient monuments, historic buildings, parklands, recreational facilities and sites associated with historic, literary, artistic or other events of significance. The pictorial and decorative maps were generated by volunteer groups, and the process of creating the map is as valuable as the end document. The process helped build communities, and promote and celebrate the distinctive characteristics of different areas.

More information at: Perkins, Chris 'Community Mapping' in The Cartographic Journal, Vol 44, No. 2 2007, pp 127-137; and www.commonground.co.uk.

Cultural mapping in Canadian Indigenous communities

Tenure mapping evolved as a discipline in Canada in the 1970s, in negotiations between Canadian authorities and Inuit and Cree communities. In this process "map-biographies" of families of hunters, fishers and gatherers are inscribed on a traditional cartographic map. These maps distil information about seasonal movements, wildlife and topographical features in the region, as well as cultural practices and demographic information.

These maps have become invaluable sources of historical and practical information. Digital versions of the maps include layers that show videos of community elders recounting stories and singing traditional songs.

Similar community generated maps have been useful for land claims in Indonesian and South American countries.

More information available at: Poole, Peter *Cultural Mapping and Indigenous Peoples: A Report for UNESCO* , March 2003. (http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37024&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

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