

# Attachment 1

## Defining Museums

### Introduction

There are various Museums definitions in the open market, many of these are open-ended, high level statements. While this may seem appropriate, it does though create confusion in the minds of many. Not all museums are the same but legislation treats them as having equal standing despite their vast differences in what they do.

### What should a Museum be about?

To LSAFM, any museum should be about its collection, its significance and how that significance is accessed, promoted and used for educational purposes. We see museums as places of discovery, of history, of technical knowledge and of learning.

### LSAFM operating environment

In the line of work of the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum (LSAFM), there are taxpayer funded museums, volunteer-based museums, Council run museums and privately funded museums. But not all of these museums meet the specific criteria but they are still regarded as museums under the law.

We are required to abide by the NSW Firearms Regulation 2017 (Clause 59 – Museum Firearms Permit). The definition of a museum, per the Regulation is:

*“Public museum means a non-profit making institution that:*

- a) Has a written constitution that states the museum’s charter, goals and policies;*
- b) Has a stated acquisition policy;*
- c) Acquires, conserves and exhibits objects of scientific or historical interest for the purposes of study, education and public enjoyment;*
- d) Is sufficiently financed to enable the conduct and development of the museum;*
- e) Has adequate premises to fulfil its basic functions of collection, research, storage, conservation, education and display;*
- f) Is regularly open to the public.*

The most significant aspect of the definition is point c).

In the context of that Regulation, there are taxpayer museums (and others) which are treated as Museums (through Permits) even though they do not carry out that specific function.

In other words, if Museums are truly about ‘study, education and public enjoyment’ then why is it that some Museums have their firearm artefacts sitting in a basement for no-one to see. They don’t acquire or exhibit, although some monitoring / conservation possibly occurs. They don’t educate. And they certainly don’t provide public enjoyment. Then, there is the issue of 63 Museum Firearm Permits issued in NSW which to our way of thinking are ‘lots of museums’ which may or may not satisfy the above definition.

The reason for raising this very issue is because it debases the very essence of why a museum exists. It also highlights how organisations like ours are ‘lumped’ together with others which are not strictly museums (under the Act). And this very issue is one of the major reasons the LSAFM is in this crisis of permanent deactivation of firearms when truly it should be exempted from the NSW Firearms Act.

### How should Museums be defined under Clause 59, Museum Firearms Permit

LSAFM believes any museum with firearm objects which meet the following criteria should be exempt from the NSW Firearms Act because they are truly museums acting in the interests of society in a secure operating environment.

The mandatory requirements for recognition as a museum should be as follows:

- (i) Acquires, preserves, researches, documents, interprets, exhibits, safeguards and enhances the understanding of objects of scientific or historical interest for the purposes of study, research, education and public enjoyment;
- (ii) Is a not-for-profit, participatory institution strengthening scholarship and collaboration through networks and educational services;
- (iii) Has a collections assessment of significance with documented culture and heritage;
- (iv) Has a written constitution inclusive of the museum's charter, goals and policies;
- (v) Has a management structure with Custodial accountabilities and a clear succession pathway;
- (vi) Is sufficiently financed to enable the on-going development of the museum;
- (vii) As adequate premises to fulfil its functions of collection, research, storage, conservation, education, preservation for future generations and display;
- (viii) Has conforming security processes and systems in place safeguarding the general public, museum staff and museum collections; and,
- (ix) Is regularly open to the public.