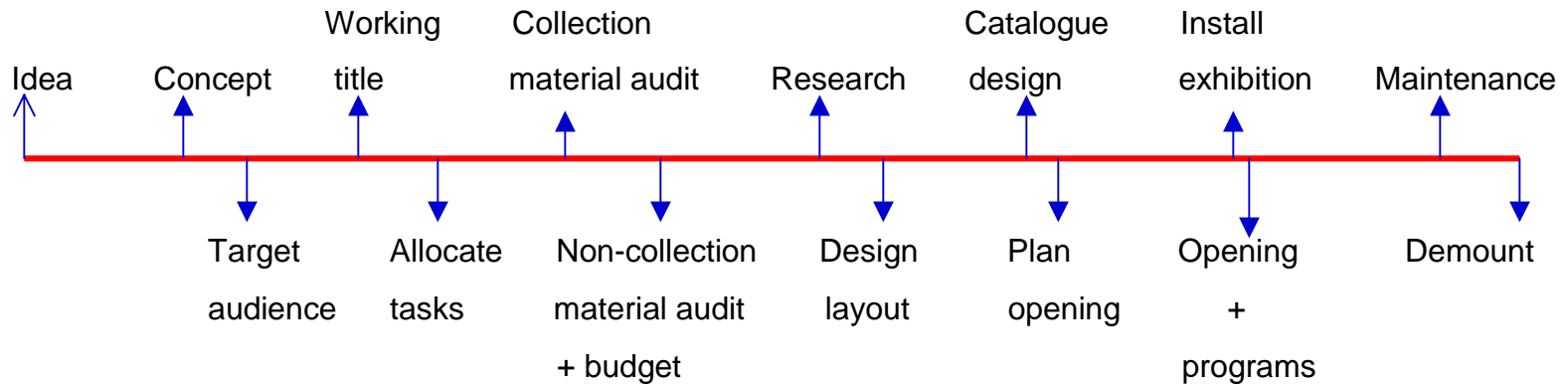


# Exhibition development timeline



Exhibitions by museums and by other sources – are they different?

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Should there be a difference between the type of exhibition which a museum or art gallery curates and that which other community and business organisations develop?

# The Difference



A business's exhibitions are about promoting increased product or service sales.

A museum's exhibitions should be about something else.

*The 'something else' is ideas.*

A museum is in a powerful position, via its exhibitions, to promote an awareness of the different and changing interpretations which have been placed on history

# What is an exhibition?

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The word 'exhibition' means different things to different people.

Some ideas of what an exhibition is include –

- A showing of works of art
- A display of photographs
- An exposure of real objects
- An awareness raising exercise for a service organisation
- A visual presentation of ideas
- Brisbane's annual Show – the 'Ekka'
- Something that gives people something to look at when attending a conference
- A promotion of a new product, club or service
- The placards and other paraphernalia for selling a product

All of these ideas can qualify as exhibitions.

The word 'show' tends to be used more for exhibitions of artworks. However, this term is acceptable in relation to exhibitions in other types of museums.

The word 'display' is often used interchangeably with the word 'exhibition'.

There is a tendency to consider 'displays' as simple and small, compared to 'exhibitions' which are larger and more thoughtfully prepared.

Museums always should work to develop thoughtfully prepared exhibitions regardless of their scale.

Making exhibitions is about making choices.





## Why have an exhibition?

Some of the purposes of *museum* exhibitions are to –

- entertain people
- educate people
- enlighten people
- expose a community/region/State/nation to history as evidenced by artefacts, documents, works of art, photographs, etc.
- inspire and motive people
- communicate ideas
- provide people with an escape from day-to-day life
- tell all ‘sides’ of a story
- sell politically correct points of view about society
- act as a store for historical objects.

The first six are very acceptable to the museum industry. There are arguments for and against the next two. The last two are not acceptable to the museum industry.

# **Who is an exhibition for?**

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**Often the response is that a  
museum exhibition is for  
*everyone***

# **Target Audiences**

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**People in a community can be grouped according to age, interests, ethnic backgrounds, gender, families, clubs & societies, education, amongst many others.**

**Some people will fit into a number of groups.**

**These groups are referred to as target audiences.**

**A museum exhibition needs to be curated with one or more target audience specifically in mind.**

**‘Everyone’ is featureless, with his/her characteristics unknown.**

**Once the target audiences are identified, it is possible to conduct research to understand them better.**

**Museums need to know their potential audience in order to prepare the most appropriate exhibition.**

# How are exhibitions developed/curated?

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Exhibition development requires planning and careful thought.

This includes making a project map and scheduling tasks.

## **Exhibitions usually fall into one of four categories:**

**Static**

**Storage**

**Thematic**

**Taxonomic**

NOTE: While a **static** display might suggest one that remains unchanged in the same place, and is considered a *permanent* display, in this case it means objects or works of art of the same type displayed together with little or no information about the objects or their makers. They are shown simply as objects with no reference to their environment or social context.

What are the tasks of exhibition development & management?

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**Each of the tasks associated with exhibition development and management comprise a number of specific activities.**

**Details of these tasks (from Task A to Task I) and their component activities are contained in the handout, along with a schematic timeline for the tasks.**

## Exhibition policy

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**Determining the exhibition idea, message, story or concept is the first main task.**

**The options available may be limited by the museum's exhibition policy.**



## Concept Development

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**The exhibition concept is the main idea (message, story) that the exhibition is to convey.**

**Exhibition concepts will be as varied as your (and your co-workers') imagination.**

## Research maketh the exhibition

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**Museums often do not undertake thorough research and, therefore, the contextual development and interpretations are limited.**

## People working on exhibitions

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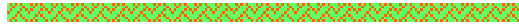
**This can be one person or many people.**

**The many tasks can be done by one person or shared.**

**Larger institutions use specialists to look after specific tasks. The same work has to be done in smaller museums but it is shared across a few people.**

**Exhibitions are best developed by a group of people, but there needs to be ONE leader.**

Who are the people?



**The exhibition development team  
might include:**

**curator**

**designer**

**project manager**

**education officer**

## Which objects to include?

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- 1. Carry out an audit of the collection to determine what suitable objects are available.**
- 2. Identify gaps/weaknesses in the inventory.**
- 3. Identify sources of supplementary material from outside the collection.**
- 4. Select from the whole scope of the material available.**
- 5. Finalise any necessary loan arrangements and documentation**

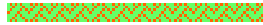
## Non-collection materials audit

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**This involves investigating and detailing all the other ‘things’ associated with mounting the exhibition apart from collection or borrowed objects.**

**It includes the proposed exhibition space.**

# Budgets



**Before proceeding to develop the exhibition layout, catalogue, opening event, etc., *it is a good idea to check what the budget allows for this exhibition.***

**There may be a need to seek sponsorship and this may impact on the actual exhibition.**

# Exhibition layout

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2D and 3D scale models are used to plan the layout

Planning must take into account:

- mobility and disability issues
- health & safety (public liability)
- simple creature comforts
- ongoing maintenance of the exhibition
- security



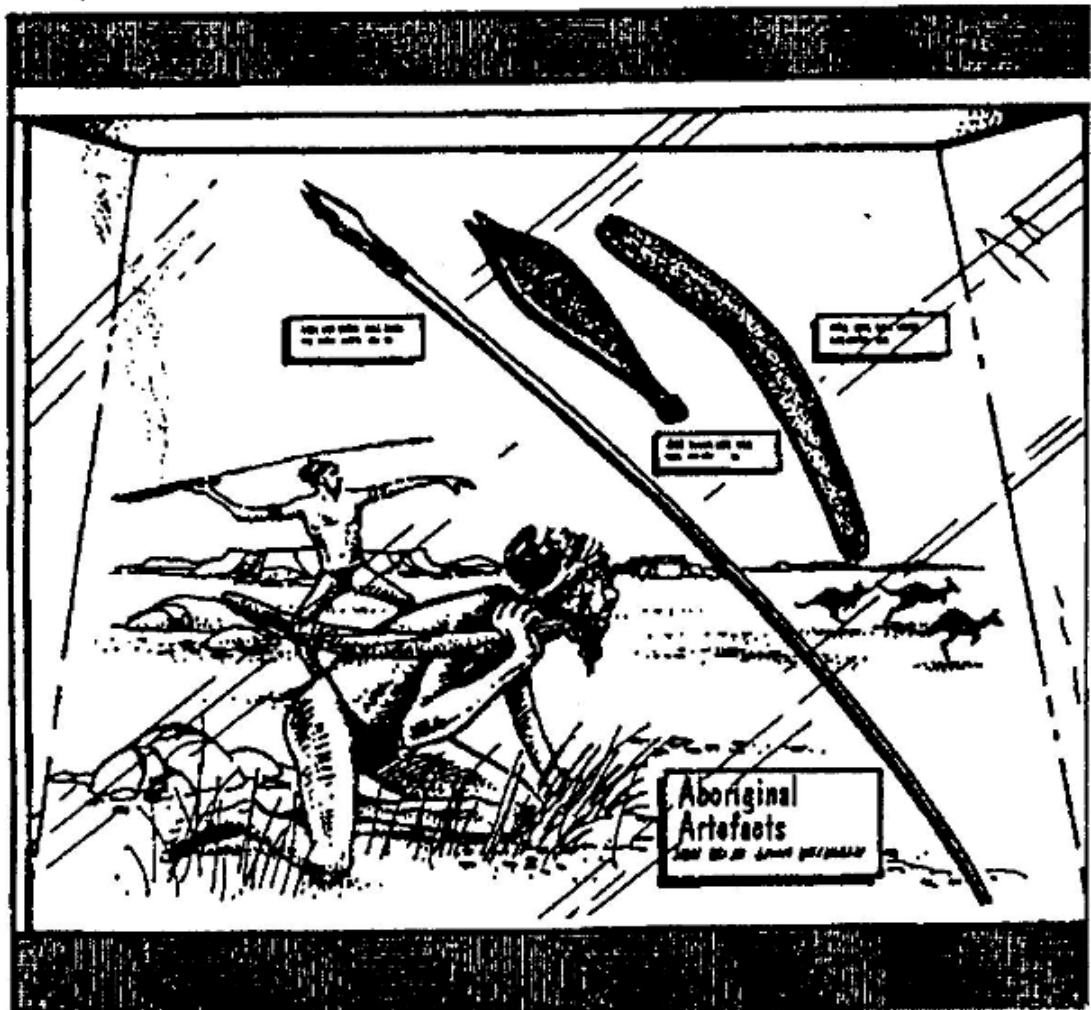
# What else?



**Is there to be:**

- a catalogue or brochure**
- advertising / publicity**
- an opening event**
- some form of public and/or outreach program?**

**What are the maintenance requirements and how will these be met?**



THE SPEAR AND  
SPEARHEAD

BOOMERANG

SPEAR-THROWER

Aboriginal  
Artefacts  
1911-1912