

Dusty, neglected galleries? Not here!!!

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The Gallery Maintenance (GM) Program

The Memorial provides a gallery maintenance program for the care of collections on display. The program consists of fifty four staff volunteers from across all sections of the Memorial. Each team is made up of between one and six people and is assigned to a particular gallery where they volunteer for two hours per month. Two full-time Preventive Conservation Assistants work in conjunction with the GM teams to conduct daily cleaning of the collection display and storage areas. Three of the Memorial's galleries contain large technology objects (LTOs) that require the use of elevated work platforms (EWPs) for cleaning - a scissor lift and a knuckle boom are both available.

Duties

Microfibre cloths and vacuums are used for the majority of cleaning. The only chemicals used for cleaning are Kunststoff (an anti-static product) for acrylic showcases and a 30% v/v ethanol/water mixture for glass.

Aside from dusting and inspecting for damage, graffiti, signs of deterioration, and possible pest infestations, the teams are also responsible for checking and replacing nappies placed to prevent oil leaks in the galleries from technology items, as well as checking for rubbish and removing chewing gum. Holes or spaces (such as gun barrels) that make tempting targets frequently have rubbish thrown into them and this can lie undetected and hard to reach. All of the guns on display at the Memorial have had plugs placed in the end of their barrels to prevent this.

The Preventive Conservation Assistants are responsible for maintaining the thermohygrographs, cleaning drip trays, and checking tyre pressures.

Monitoring

Environment

The temperature and relative humidity are monitored in all of the galleries using thermohygrographs. Light levels are also measured on a regular basis in the galleries with handheld equipment to ensure recommended light levels are maintained for all collection objects.

Pests

Gallery Maintenance teams regularly inspect and remove pests from collection items, displays, showcases and dead spaces. The floor coverings and upholstery present in large technology objects are susceptible to infestation by carpet beetles and other dermestids, as are mannequins positioned within LTOs and dressed in uniforms made of wool.

Canberra is inundated with Bogong moths migrating from North Queensland to the Snowy Mountains every summer. Despite precautions to prevent their ingress, the moths infiltrate every area of the Memorial. Large technology objects can harbour Bogong moth carcasses which, if left, are attacked by carpet beetles. These beetles pose a risk to collection items when they finish the Bogong moth carcasses and move along in search of new food sources.

Induction and Training

Although the majority of volunteers are trained conservation and registration staff, the use of unskilled staff has not been a problem. An induction session is provided for all new recruits, describing the handling requirements of textiles, paper, metals and objects, the importance of keen observation skills, conservation approved cleaning methods and materials, how to record the work completed, and how to report damage and potential risks to both humans and the collection.

Documentation

Each of the galleries has a folder containing Exhibition and Travel forms for all of the collection items on display in the gallery, including the LTOs. These forms contain current information about the state of the object - an image of the object, the most recent condition report, the name of the conservator who prepared it for display, measurements for the display configuration, location of accession number on the object, hazards, handling instructions and environmental recommendations. Each LTO also has a maintenance plan and maintenance log sheet in the folder. The folders are available to be consulted whenever the collection items are to be handled, or if damage is suspected.

Roster

Each team is supervised by a conservator, who delegates duties and provides advice to other team members in collection handling and ensuring that conservation concerns are addressed.

Elevated Work Platforms

Planes, trains, and automobiles – the majority of LTOs are capable of being cleaned by hand from the floor or with the use of extendable poles. However the size and juxtaposition of several objects require the EWPs to be used for some cleaning. At least

two people are required to operate this type of equipment, but only one of them is required to carry a license. Safety checks are conducted prior to and following operation of the equipment. Both EWP's are powered with rechargeable batteries.

The installation of the Lancaster Bomber into Anzac Hall has brought to the fore several new cleaning challenges for gallery maintenance staff:

1. The underside of the aircraft has been painted a matte black which has a high proportion of carbon black in it. This has created an irregular surface that is impossible to dust with any sort of cloth, as the surface 'grabs' fibres from the cloths and holds on, leaving the surface worse off than before. The other option is to vacuum the surface, but that would be prohibitively time consuming. 3M manufacture an adhesive tape with varying levels of stickiness and we have found one that fulfils our requirements. The tape can be cut to any required width. It is then wrapped around a paint roller on an extendable pole and rolled along the painted surface to pick up the dust.
2. The length and depth of the wingspan have made it quite difficult and time consuming to clean from the EWP, even with the extendable poles. As a result, we are proposing to install a fall-arrest system from which a fully trained staff member can walk along the wings secured to a safety system bolted into the 'I' beams in the gallery. The person will also be required to wear special footwear to prevent the scuffing of the painted surface.
3. Manoeuvring an EWP in close proximity to collection items is a calculated risk. If cleaning can be undertaken without the use of this equipment then an alternate approach is preferred in order to reduce the risk of accidental impact between the equipment and collection items.

Materials/equipment

A gallery maintenance store cupboard is situated in one of the galleries. It stores all materials and equipment that might be required for cleaning or minor conservation work. Some of the equipment on hand are:

- vacuums with variable suction and a selection of tools,
- a variety of microfibre cloths and floor tools (see Appendix A for details),
- portable lights,
- a fully stocked tool box,
- personal protective equipment,
- light monitor,
- Exhibition and Travel forms for each gallery,
- extension leads, and
- nappies for oil leaks

Appendix

Microfibre Cloth	Colour/Appearance	Application	Method	Laundrying	Cost	Supplier
Sabco - Dust	pink	general dusting	damp/dry	Machine washable	\$3.14	Q Stores
Sabco - Glass	blue	glass cleaning	damp/dry	Machine washable	\$3.14	Q Stores
Sabco - General Cleaning	purple	general cleaning	damp/dry	Machine washable		Q Stores
Scotch Brite	green	general dusting	damp/dry	Hot water safe, wash frequently	\$3.95	Grocery stores
Dust Bunny	white	general dusting	dry	Machine washable	\$9.82/2	Zetta Florence
Britette - microfibre MILLEntex® cloth	assorted colours	general dusting	damp/dry	Machine washable to 90 C	\$3.50	Canberra Discount Chemicals
ENJO - dust cloth	orange/shaggy	irregular surfaces	dry	Machine washable to 60 C		ENJO dealer
ENJO - glass cleaning cloth	yellow	glass	dry	Machine washable to 60 C		ENJO dealer
Pledge Grab It - Dry Cloths	white, plastic thread running through it.	glass	dry	disposable	20 for \$5.99	Grocery stores

N.B. Do not place any of the microfibre cloths in the dryer, they must be hung to dry. Do not use fabric softeners or bleach.

ENJO cloths should be placed into a laundry bag when washing in the machine because some fibres will lint and others will attract lint.

Floor Tools

Sabco floor tools with washable microfibre pads are used for cleaning flat surfaces such as aircraft wings and display cabinet surfaces. The floor tools are attached to extendable poles of varying lengths which have an angle section between the pole and the floor tool. The angle prevents the pole from accidentally scraping against the collection items.