



# ACHAA

Aboriginal Culture, Heritage & Arts Association

*Living Centres for Living Cultures*

## **ACHAA's Introductory Guide to Shipping and Packaging**

### **For Art/Merchandise Sales**

This guide is an introduction to packaging and shipping art and merchandise. The guide is not all-encompassing and is intended to be an introduction to shipping and packaging. Senders are responsible for the safe arrival of all shipped items.

#### **Step 1: Assessing an item's shipping needs.**

When shipping an item, each item is going to have its own needs and concerns regarding safety during shipping and handling. Before beginning the process, it's important to take the time to understand any vulnerabilities in the piece and how those could best be addressed.

For example, a ceramic or otherwise fragile item will need to have significant efforts made to package the item to soften it, and specific attention will need to be given to any spouts, handles, or any portion of the piece that juts out over the edges.

When assessing a painting or print, note whether it is framed or stretched. From unstretched/unframed works, note the texture and stability of the paint/printing ink. If there is a possibility of flaking/wearing due to friction. Does the artwork need to be stored flat? Or can the work be rolled and shipped using a tube?

In essence, take the time to look at all qualities of the item you're sending and note down any features that need to be addressed when packaging it.

#### **Step 2: Preparing an item for packing**

After you've assessed the item, it's time to prepare the item for its journey. This includes:

- Ensuring the item is clean
- Removing any hardware that could damage the item
- Allowing time for the work to be completely dry

- Documenting the condition of the item before shipping

Each item will need different cleaning methods before shipping, the important thing is that there is no dust, oil, or moisture in contact with the item. Try not to use any solvents/chemicals when cleaning as this could alter paint, ink, glazes, textures, or finishes of pieces. Typically, a microfibre cloth that has had all the water strongly wrung out of it used gently to remove any dust or oil present. Should there be any moisture added during this process, allow some time for this to dry fully before moving to the next step.

### Step 3: Packing and protecting the item.

Firstly, when shipping any item, you must include a printed tax invoice for the recipient. Should you need guidance on creating a tax invoice, ACHAA can support that. Secondly, you may want to include a Certificate of Authenticity issued from your centre to go alongside the work. This offers your buyer additional comfort in the authenticity of the art and artist they are supporting, and can be a unique addition to the package for the recipient.

Each item is going to have different packaging requirements to ensure safe travel during the shipping process. The following suggestions are for consideration, but each individual item should be assessed wholly, and packaging is up to each sender. Do note that once you have handed over the goods, you cannot control how the package is treated during the shipping process, so it is best to err on the side of caution. Staff at your local post office can provide insight on the best packaging materials for any item if you're unsure.

**Unframed, unstretched prints or paintings** can be packaged in two distinct ways; rolled, or sent flat:



Pictured are the Rigid Mailer envelope and Mailing Tube from Australia Post.

The shipping tube ships the item rolled in a stiff cardboard tube and offer slightly more safety than the rigid envelope. For that we recommend its use where possible. For items larger than A3, a tube must be used. For items that must remain flat for the integrity of the work, the rigid mailer does offer support and structure to protect the item.

Regardless of the method chosen, consider using additional measures to protect the integrity of the item, particularly if there is fragile paint or ink that could be scuffed during shipping. The best practice to prepare artwork for shipping is beginning with a layer of tissue or newspaper around the item to protect the material from minor scuffs/damage to the artwork's finer details from friction or bumps. Also consider if a plastic sleeve is appropriate as a waterproofing element based on the method selected.

Framed or stretched artworks that are rigid in structure require some additional consideration when shipping to pad and prepare the item for safe travel. These items can be shipped in a box or bag depending on its needs:



Pictured are the soft Prepaid Satchel, Letter Guage Mailer, and the Tough Bag from Australia Post.

Depending on the size and, consider whether a custom box is right for the item. When packing the item, lining the item with acid-free tissue paper offers some protection for the paint or inks used on the surface of the work. Secondly, consider additional packaging to pad the item for shipping:



Pictured are the honeycomb paper, bubble wrap, and tissue paper all available for purchase at Australia Post.

Bubble wrap is recommended for stretched canvas and frames, with a particular focus on reinforcing the corners of the piece that may be additionally fragile. Consider when sending a stretch canvas that may bow in the centre of the piece if pressure is applied, that thick rigid carboard could also be used to reinforce the surface of the canvas to avoid stretching or tearing during shipping.

**Fragile items (ceramics, sculpture, pottery etc.)** should be considered with extreme care and specifics of the item in mind. Start by carefully assessing the item to decide how to best ship in a freeform parcel or box:



Pictured are AusPost's Satchel Mailer Box and Padded Bag.

Some small and simple designs may be able to be packaged in a padded bag with appropriate padding, however the safest option will always be a box and for that reason it is what we recommend. Once you have selected the container, its important to consider how you will package and pad the item for safety:



Pictured are the honeycomb paper, bubble wrap, and tissue paper all available for purchase at Australia Post.

When padding the item, take stock of any ends or handles that jut out and may be additionally fragile, and ensure that there is padding wrapped around the individual pieces to avoid snapping:



If the item is hollow (such as a cup, pot, or hollow sculpture, best practice would be to include additional padding in the inside of the piece to reinforce it's structure.

When padding and packaging a fragile item, consider whether you would be comfortable dropping the item from shoulder height or tossing it across a room with confidence that it will not break. Use of a "FRAGILE" sticker will not guarantee that the package will be able to be softly handled at all shipping stages.

**Soft items such as clothing, textiles, woven items** and the like can be packed less strictly, as they are unlikely to have as many fragile elements. It's still important to assess the goods and its needs, particularly any woven item that may have intricate elements that may be damaged by friction or jostling and bumping during the shipping process.

These items can be shipped in many different way depending on the size and needs:



Pictured are the Flat Rate Satchel, Satchel Mailer Box, and Tough Bag from AusPost.

Should you have an item to ship that does not fit any of the above, staff at your local post office can support you in selecting appropriate packaging and shipping container.

## Step 4: Selecting a shipping method

Many of Australia Post's shipping containers will denote its shipping method. At ACHAA, whilst we do recommend express shipping where possible, standard flat rate shipping is also suitable. Just ensure that the selected method is fully trackable during the shipping process so that the recipient and you can track the item's whereabouts if required.

When you ship the item, be sure to include the recipient's phone number alongside the name and address, as this number can be used by AusPost to supply tracking updates to the recipient.

Importantly, do note the tracking number given to you by AusPost staff upon shipping. This number is usually listed on the receipt supplied for shipping or supplied in the form of a sticker. It may be worth filing this number, taking a photo of the receipt, or keeping the tracking number in a safe place for reference.

## Step 5: Additional Extras/Insuring the item

Australia Post provide additional extras when shipping that should be considered when shipping. Each sender is responsible for the safe arrival of the items and is responsible for any insurance or extras added. Should your item be worth more than \$100, we do recommend purchasing insurance cover for the items, as well as requesting signature upon delivery. This offers the comfort that the item will not be lost anywhere in the shipping process and will arrive safely, and should the worst occur that Australia Post will be able to cover the cost of the item.



### **Extra Cover<sup>1</sup>**

Provides loss or damage cover up to the specified value of your item (from \$100 to \$5,000).



### **Signature on Delivery<sup>1</sup>**

Captures the signature of the recipient of your item on delivery.



### **Email Track Advice**

Provides the recipient of your parcel with progress updates through its delivery journey.

## Step 6: Track the item

During the shipping journey, you can track the progress of its delivery. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the progress of the item, reach out to Australia Post on their website at [auspost.com.au](http://auspost.com.au) or via phone by calling 13 POST (137678).