

National Capital Educational Tourism Project



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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

SUBMISSION: REVIEW ON EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The National Capital Educational Tourism Project is a joint initiative of the Federal Government via the National Capital Authority, the National Capital Attractions Association (representing both Federal Government institutions and private attractions) and the ACT Government.

Its aim is to increase the number of students that visit the National Capital each year giving them the opportunity to engage in Australia's democracy, history and culture at institutions such as the National Museum of Australia.

The NCETP responds to this review's terms of reference from the position of education and quality public programs for schools.

1. AIMS and CONTENT

- ❑ The National Museum of Australia provides a comprehensive view of Australia's history. The collection, in particular the focus on Aboriginal history, is unmatched anywhere else in Australia. This is critical to the cultural development and education of young Australians.

- ❑ The content and substance of each national institution in the National Capital is varied. The National Museum of Australia has provided an excellence compliment to already existing institutions and the expectation that Australia should have a national museum in the National Capital. While these other national institutions cover the culture and history of Australia, the Museum has successfully focused on aspects that are not found anywhere else. An example of this is the Museum's exploration into people and interaction with the environment.



Discover What it means to be Australian IN YOUR NATIONAL CAPITAL

- ❑ The public and education programs offered by the National Museum of Australia have been well received. The Museum's displayed collections and exhibitions can often be overwhelming to young Australians. The education section has been pivotal in creating programs that provide focus to student's learning and personal interpretation. The 'Living culture program' uses the Aboriginal collection to ensure that young Australians are exposed to the culture of our indigenous people, that in the past was not widely understood.
- ❑ There is no doubt, each of the 85,000 students that leave the Museum have a greater understanding of Australia's history and a sense of pride in the Australian community due the quality of the education programs and providers at the Museum.
- ❑ Young audiences outside Canberra, with no possibility of physically visiting the National Museum of Australia are also catered for through a range of education resources. The National Museum of Australia has a wealth of knowledge to be shared among the Australian community. This has been realised. Resources such as 'Our voices with Rigby' and the 'History Mysteries' program are being used in schools around Australia. The education section has been proactive in ensuring awareness and use of the resources is wide and varied.
- ❑ The Museum's education section has also been instrumental in many collaborative programs with other like institutions such as the Australian War Memorial. These two institutions host at least 12 graduate teachers of history twice a year to further expose the Australian education industry to the historical collections, research and resources available.

These students, who are learning best practice teaching, have evaluated and analysed the programs offered by the Museum. The response has been extremely positive with their indicated intention being to use these practices and the resources of the Museum in their future classroom

- ❑ In summary, with a large and sometimes complicated displays and exhibitions, school programs are critical in allowing young Australians to identify with the National Museum of Australia ensuring the range of experiences are fully realised. In addition the best practise teaching is giving the Museum a competitive edge within the Australian education industry.

2. FUTURE PRIORITIES

- ❑ Like many national institutions that interpret Australia's history and culture there is a danger that education will not be seen as an important function. The education of young Australians in our history and culture is important in the growth and development of a positive national identity. It is often reported that museum and gallery experience can have positive effects on even difficult children.
- ❑ For young Australians in particular, education programs are critical in providing a framework for personal interpretation. The National Museum of Australia's exhibitions and displays were created for a more adult level of visitor and its an important obligation to ensure students have assistance in exploring the same issues and themes.
- ❑ The programs of the National Museum of Australia have progressed well and even after a short period of operation are respected among other institutions and the Australian education industry.
- ❑ The recommendation from the National Capital Educational Tourism Project is that education should have continuing priority within the Museum and that the public programs be continually expanded and evaluated.

The National Capital Educational Tourism Project is happy to make any further comment if required.

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