

CHARTER OF OPERATIONS 2008-09 NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

The National Museum of Australia (NMA) recognises the important role it plays in contribution to the enhancement of Australian culture and identity. In particular, the NMA intends to continue its *Mission* to promote an understanding of Australia's history and an awareness of future possibilities through:

- the development, preservation and exhibition of a significant collection
- a leadership role in research and scholarship
- the provision of access for audiences nationally and internationally by delivering innovative programs.

1. The NMA will provide national leadership within the broader collections sector by:

- building relationships with the museum sector in Australia and internationally through collaborations on exhibitions, supporting exchanges with Pacific museums, and staging and participating in international conferences.

2. The NMA will work collaboratively with the other national collecting institutions to explore operational efficiencies through shared services by:

- working through the Heads of Cultural Institutions (HOCl) to develop a strategic approach to common collection policy and operational issues, including storage, preservation and digitisation
- working through the Corporate Management Forum of the Commonwealth Cultural Collecting and Exhibiting Agencies to explore and implement opportunities for ongoing cooperation between member agencies with regard to corporate services and other areas of common interest including working groups relating to financial management, human resources, information technology and facilities management.

3. The NMA will jointly agree on the parameters of their collecting with the national collecting institutions and avoid overlap by:

- developing collection acquisition policy that clearly identifies the NMA's rationale for collecting as determined by the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980*
- working through the HOCl to develop a strategic approach to common collection acquisition issues and to avoid areas of potential overlap.

4. The NMA will develop frameworks and strategies in conjunction with the national collecting institutions around common areas of collection management by:

- continuing to develop, manage and maintain its collections and improve collections storage in conjunction with the Australian National Audit Office's *Safe and Accessible National Collections* report by:
 - developing the National Historical Collection through key acquisitions and targeted collecting projects;

- developing storage and management plans that ensure the long-term preservation and sustainability of the National Museum's collections; and
- increasing the quantity, quality and accessibility of collection information.

5. The NMA will ensure widest possible access to collections through the development of travelling exhibitions and public programs by:

- delivering the following travelling exhibitions program:
 - *Ned Kelly: Fact and Fiction* will travel to Parramatta, Eden (NSW) and Bundaberg (QLD);
 - *In Search of the Birdsville Track: An Artist in the Outback* will travel to Bathurst (NSW);
 - *Between the Flags: 100 Years of Surf Lifesaving* will travel to Coffs Harbour, Eden (NSW), Gold Coast (QLD), and Melbourne (VIC);
 - *Behind the Lines: the Year's Best Cartoons 2007* will travel to Perth (WA), Bega (NSW), and Brisbane (QLD);
 - *League of Legends: 100 Years of Rugby League in Australia* will travel to Brisbane, Townsville (QLD), Sydney (NSW) and Melbourne (VIC);
 - *Papunya Painting: Out of the Desert* will travel to Sydney (NSW).
- delivering the following outreach/education programs:
 - *Snapshots* - development of displays about their communities with remote primary schools;
 - *Plenty Stories* - curriculum resource for primary students on Australia's Indigenous cultures;
 - *Australian History Mysteries 3* - curriculum resource for secondary students on 20th century Australian history.
- implementing recommendations in accord with the *NMA Review of Exhibitions and Public Programs* by:
 - delivering the new *Australian Journeys* gallery by late 2008;
 - delivering the new *Creating a Country* gallery by late 2009;
 - continuing to secure significant and iconic objects for the National Historical Collection; and
 - continuing to develop and deliver a temporary exhibitions program.
- strengthening research and scholarship capability by:
 - devising a program of research, conferences and publications;
 - integrating the operations of the Centre for Historical Research into existing NMA research in Australian history, museum studies and material culture; and
 - establishing research partnerships with academic and institutional partners.

6. The NMA will ensure widest possible access to collections by undertaking partnerships with other Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government agencies by:

- working through HOI participate in the Federated Discovery Service managed by the National Library of Australia which will enable web users to search for cultural information from the databases of all the national collecting institutions and the Collections Australia Network in a single search.

7. The NMA will engage strategically with Australian Government and Cultural Ministers Council key initiatives by:

- continuing to participate in Indigenous repatriation programs
- assisting the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (the Department) as appropriate with the development of a framework for the repatriation of non-Australian Indigenous ancestral remains
- actively engaging with the Collections Council of Australia through its key programs, initiatives and products as appropriate
- actively engaging with the Collections Australia Network through its online program as appropriate
- continuing to work cooperatively with the Minister, the Department and other portfolio agencies to effectively fulfil the NMA's role as Australia's pre-eminent social history museum. This will include:
 - fully informing the Minister and the Department in a timely manner of the NMA's activities and of any significant events relating to the Museum's business
 - responding to requests from the Minister's office in consultation with the Department; and
 - through implementation of its approved 2007-08 Strategic Plan, business priorities, and portfolio performance measures, and through consulting with departmental officers as required to maintain the highest standards of corporate governance to meet its compliance and governance requirements.

8. The NMA will undertake activities that will develop stronger links with the broader creative sector and assist it to develop and grow by:

- delivering the NMA's scholarship and research program which will bring leading scholars to research the NMA's collections and programs. In 2008-09, the Centre for Historical Research will:
 - conduct a full research program, producing books, articles, papers and other research products, relating to the Museum's themes and collection
 - administer the Museum's Visiting Fellowship scheme
 - offer opportunities for researchers to work with the Centre and the Museum as curatorial attachments, students, visitors, associates and interns, and
 - offer a calendar of formal and informal conferences, symposia, talks, lectures and events at the Museum