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28 December 2002

Dr John Carroll PhD (Camb)
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Dear Dr Carroll

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Panel Chairman of the National Museum's review committee.

I am not a regular letter writer but have been moved to contact you because of a deep and passionate disappointment our family felt as a result of our inspection review of the National Museum's exhibitory.

I certainly profess not to have any training in the area of anthropology; but I do have a vast and successful experience in the discipline of marketing international and national events (World Expositions and high focus national sporting events), for the governments of Australia, Austria, Spain and Queensland, and can quickly advise you why the National Museum has been and will continue to be, a financial millstone around the neck of the Commonwealth Government; unless the museum's "product" has been subjected to a major makeover.

The first mistake lay with the decision to "in-house" plan the museum content and then to gather artefacts to support the "in-house" plan. This is a common enough exercise in self-gratification and invariably fails because it does not set out to reflect the interests and expectations of its target audiences; in this case, the visiting public and the prospective corporate sponsors.

For instance, in the World Expo '88 event before preparing the product strategy, I commissioned eight market research studies which tested product content concepts and reactions to a variety of product themings. All told, nineteen research studies in the product area and into consumer prospective reactions were undertaken before the Expo '88 product was produced. As a result of this homework, the Expo '88 product attracted over 23 million paying "clicks of the turnstiles" and also attracted over \$AUD140 million in corporate branding and sponsorships; and lastly and most importantly, returned a profit to the State government.

So to get the product and the theming right you must test concepts and ideas before you proceed to the point of developing a final product strategy with confidence of public and corporate acceptance.

I understand that post-production exit polls have been undertaken by the museum management, but these are useless because they send the wrong signals and are used as a political ploy by seeking answers to loaded questions which first year marketing students were capable of composing..

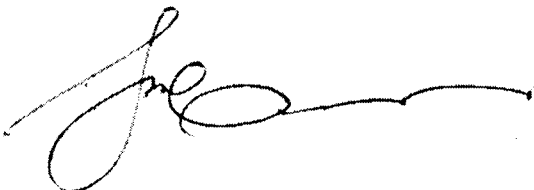
It is accepted as a marketing tenet that everybody usually likes something if they don't have to pay for it; but become super critical and analytical about the products and services for which they must pay.

Put bluntly, the National Museum product is in desperate need of a makeover and will only succeed if the re-casted product is predominantly about positive matters, positive achievements, a celebration of Australia's birth, and its development with art, manufactures, etc, which truly reflect Australia's inventiveness and unquenchable energies.

The current museum product has a preoccupation for depicting the history of our nation in terms of constant struggle and turmoil. From a marketing viewpoint, it is one monstrous lead-balloon for a whole raft of reasons. Neither has the current museum product any likelihood of attracting any genuine corporate sponsorships because surprise, surprise, corporate Australia is managed by Anglo-Saxons, the same species who represent the majority of the population of this nation; and who have been pre-eminently responsible for Australia's growth and productivity which has made this nation proud and achievement oriented.

I hope that my comments are useful in providing some marketing perspective to your deliberations because it amazes many of my marketing colleagues that the Commonwealth has a superb war museum which is recognized by both Australians and our off-shore visitors as amongst the world's best, and therefore eminently marketable. By comparison the National Museum has a melancholic ambience and a poor product, and is therefore not marketable in its present guise to either corporate Australia for sponsorship and overseas and domestic visitors as a faithful historical expression of what has made this nation so dynamic.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Currie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Graham Currie