

28 September 2018

Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield  
Minister for Communications and the Arts  
Suite M1.46  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

## **National Museum of Australia – Statement of Intent**

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 3 August 2018 outlining your expectations for the National Museum of Australia for 2018 – 19.

On behalf of the Museum's Council, I am pleased to respond to your Statement of Expectations with this Statement of Intent. The Council and the Museum's Executive greatly value and appreciate your continued support. The Government's funding commitment to the Museum will allow us to fulfil our mission and deliver important government priorities such as the Cultural and Corporate Shared Services Centre (CCSSC) and marking the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Captain Cook's voyage to Australia.

### **Our vision, mission and strategic commitments**

The Museum's vision, mission and strategic commitments are described in its [Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022](#):

Our **vision** is to be a trusted voice in the national conversation, and recognised as one of Australia's premier cultural destinations exploring Australia's past, illuminating the present and imagining the future.

Our **mission** is to bring the world's cultures to Australia and present Australia's history and culture to the world. In pursuit of this goal, the Museum has developed its ambitious Master Plan 2017–2030.

Our **strategic commitments** are to **invest, challenge, explore** and **connect** across all aspects of our business.

Our focus over the next four years will be on **five key streams** of endeavour: Collections for the 21st century; Program directions; Digital futures; Growing our business; and Brand recognition.

The Strategic Plan confirms our role as a key national cultural institution and envisages a museum for the future. By adopting new technologies and innovative methods, and making our audience central to everything we do, the Museum hopes to bring Australian stories to as many people as possible, domestically and internationally. It focuses on identifying methods to ensure that we can continue to deliver our key functions successfully, including through public-private partnerships.

We have an ambitious program for the coming year. This is outlined in our [Corporate Plan for 2018 – 2019](#), which describes key strategies and activities and our vision of what success will look like over the reporting period and into the future. The Strategic Plan and Corporate Plan are very much in alignment with the role and direction of the Museum as conveyed in your Statement of Expectations and our face-to-face meetings.

### **Our activities in support of your Statement of Expectations**

The Museum will undertake a range of activities in FY2018 – 19 in support of your Statement of Expectations. Several of these are outlined below.

- a. *Provide leadership in the management and use of our collections and support lifelong learning through the delivery of experiences for all ages*
  - The Museum's Collection Explorer project seeks to make as much of our historical collection available online as possible with 51% of our collection currently accessible digitally. In FY2018 – 19 we will aim to increase the number of objects digitised and released online by 12,500. A separate target has been set for accessioning objects, to reduce the backlog of collection items awaiting accessioning.
  - The design stages for the Discovery Centre will be completed and construction commenced by the middle of next year. The Discovery Centre will encourage young people to engage with the rich and diverse stories of Australia through play-based and hands-on experiences.
  
- b. *Develop partnership opportunities and innovative delivery models to take the Australian story to all corners of the nation*
  - The Museum has begun work on the Defining Moments Digital Classroom project, developed with the generous support of Gandel Philanthropy. The project is a comprehensive and accessible education platform aligned to the national curriculum that will allow students to explore Australian history through a range of digital products.
  - The Museum will pursue its relationships with significant cultural institutions at home and abroad including the British Museum and State and Territory museums such as the South Australian Museum and the Western Australian Museum. I am delighted to confirm that last week the Museum signed a new five-year partnership arrangement with the British Museum. Our partnership with the South Australian Museum has led to the development of a joint touring exhibition, *Yidaki: Didjeridu and the Sound of Australia*, which opened in Japan in September 2018.
  - A new Australian virtual reality film, *The Antarctic Experience*, will tour to the Museum in Canberra following its initial run at the Western Australian Maritime Museum. The film's rich and varied content is expected to be of particular interest to our family audience.
  
- c. *Explore opportunities to grow private sector support and increase own-source revenue*
  - The Museum will continue to focus on increasing its own-source revenue. Our aim is to increase own-source revenue to be at least 20% of all gross operating revenues.

- The 2018 – 19 target is to increase the Friends membership program by 50% compared to the previous financial year, while the target for corporate partnerships and philanthropy is a 20% increase. The Museum’s Council is pleased to see the Museum setting these ambitious targets in an effort to drive its performance.
- The relationship with the philanthropic sector will continue to be cultivated, with the contribution from John Gandel AO and Pauline Gandel for the Defining Moments Digital Classroom demonstrating the Museum’s capacity to attract significant philanthropic investment.

*d. Provide leadership in creating collaborative opportunities with the sector and continue to identify and implement operational efficiencies*

- In addition to the collaborative projects already mentioned, the Cultural and Corporate Shared Services Centre (CCSSC) will allow the Museum to continue to deliver high-quality corporate services to other cultural agencies, and assist the Government to manage the Budget effectively.
- The CCSSC has had a strong response from the cultural agencies. It currently provides services to the Museum of Australian Democracy, the National Portrait Gallery and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. It is looking to deliver new services to partner agencies in the coming year.

*e. Contribute to the Government’s diversity and inclusion objectives*

- Up to six new fellowships will be awarded under the Encounters Fellowships program. The program will provide Indigenous peoples working in the cultural or heritage sector – many from regional and remote areas – with professional development opportunities. Fellows will receive mentoring, learn new skills and build networks through tailored programs at the National Museum and partner institutions in Canberra, Sydney, the United Kingdom and France.
- The Museum’s outreach and access program includes virtual tours and education programs for audiences around the country and overseas. One aspect of the program provides Australian schools in remote areas, and children undertaking education in a hospital setting, with the opportunity to digitally connect with the Museum and discuss our collections in support of their learning.
- Our access programs targeting people with dementia and sensory stimuli issues, as well as our annual event celebrating the International Day of People with disability, are unique and effective ways for the Museum to contribute to the Government’s social inclusion objectives.
- This year the Museum will start developing a ‘Stretch’ Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for the Museum. The Stretch RAP aims to embed reconciliation initiatives into an organisation’s business strategies.

*f. Contribute to the Government’s cultural diplomacy outcomes*

- In 2018 – 19 the Museum will tour exhibitions to Japan and China , with several venues secured in each country.
- The Museum’s Director, Dr Mathew Trinca, will continue to co-chair the Singapore-Australia Arts Group.

- The graphic panel displays developed by the Museum for use by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will continue to be shown in Australian embassies and missions around the world.
  - Several Museum staff will travel to Vietnam later this year to deliver workshops to museum staff from cultural institutions across Vietnam, in a capacity-building program organised and funded by the Australian Embassy in Hanoi. Last delivered in 2016, the program may lead to other future collaborations including staff or exhibition exchanges and reciprocal programs.
- g. *Provide leadership in commemorations for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Captain Cook's voyage to Australia*
- The Museum is appreciative of the additional funding to deliver *Endeavour 250* (working title), which promises to be a thought-provoking exhibition and series of public programs to mark this significant anniversary. Work has begun in earnest on *Endeavour 250* with the Museum engaging with key Indigenous communities along the east coast of Australia and commencing the exhibition content and design process.

In addition to the above, the Museum will continue with work on the Forecourt renewal project, an enhancement of the Museum's outdoor entry and welcome areas, which will transform the visitor experience at the Museum. We anticipate that the design stage of the Life in Australia gallery will be completed and, subject to Public Works Committee approval, that construction work will start by the middle of next year.

The Museum will also seek to maintain its reputation as a source of expertise, providing advice to a range of organisations including government, other cultural institutions, educational bodies, and our publics. By contributing data on the performance of the Museum and the cultural sector to national reporting and planning, we will assist the Department in demonstrating that its objectives – to help protect cultural heritage and support public access to cultural experiences – are being fulfilled.

We will continue to work closely with you, the Department and portfolio agencies to achieve the expectations set out in your statement. As always we will keep you informed on significant issues relating to our activities. I look forward to discussing the Museum's performance further with you at our next meeting. Your Statement of Expectations is already available on the Museum's website and this Statement of Intent will be published as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



David Jones  
Chair of Council