



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA
Annual Report 2001–2002

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Annual Report of Operations and
Audited Financial Statements
2001–2002

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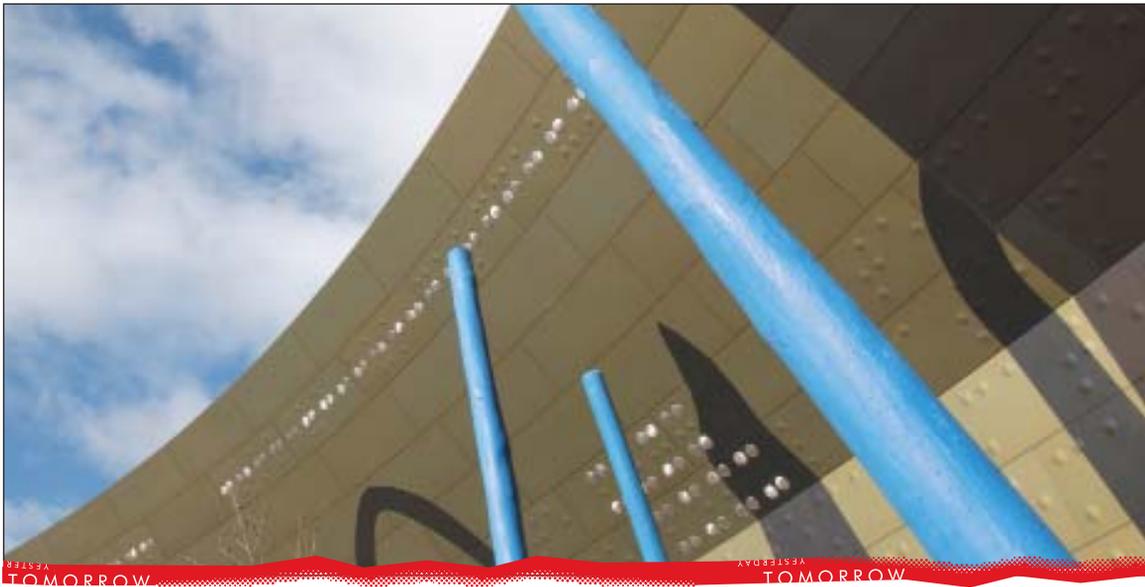
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Friday night at Sky Lounge: Cinema Under the Stars



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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Senator the Hon. Rod Kemp
Minister for the Arts and Sport
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

On behalf of the Council for the National Museum of Australia, I am pleased to submit our Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2002. The report is presented in accordance with Section 9 and Schedule 1 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, and it has been prepared in conformity with the Finance Minister's Orders.

Despite its short history and the many other cultural attractions in Canberra, the Museum has already established an impressive track record in its first full year of operations. The new Museum facility on Acton Peninsula attracted this year 903 400 visitors and in excess of one million were reached through online and broadcast programs.

The Museum's visitor surveys show high levels of satisfaction with the building, its exhibitions and programs, visitor facilities, and the excellent service provided by the Museum's staff. Visitors included a large number of family groups with children — our core audience — which augurs well for future attendance. Research has demonstrated that children who enjoy museums tend to return later as adults.

When the Government approved the building of the Museum as its gift to the nation for the celebration for the Centenary of Federation, its expectation was that the Museum would break new ground by combining the best contemporary exhibition techniques with new media technologies. The Museum has achieved this handsomely. The Council is very pleased that it has become a landmark among Australian museums in the quality and high standard of its exhibitions, public programs and the integrated use of technologies.

Achieving these standards, and ensuring the Museum is able to continue to meet both the Government and the community's expectations, presented the Museum with a major funding problem for 2002–2003 and ahead. The Council is very appreciative that the Government announced in the 2002–2003 Budget that additional funding of \$37 million would be appropriated to the Museum over four years. It is now able to continue its already recognised standard of public programs and services to visitors and users of the Museum, both in and beyond Canberra.

During its first year, the Museum demonstrated a number of strengths:

- ▶ the architecture of the Acton Peninsula facility which has won significant architectural awards, another important factor in attracting visitors



Courtesy of Auspic

*Senator the Hon.
Rod Kemp, Minister for
the Arts and Sport*



Dean Gollja

*The Hon. Tony Staley,
Chairman of the Council,
National Museum of
Australia*

- ▶ a strong audience focus which both informs the development of future programs and shapes the content of forums and debates about contemporary issues
- ▶ the capability to stage major temporary exhibitions which illuminate Australia's history and the significant role which Australia has played in global stories, ranging from the discovery and mystique of gold to deep space exploration
- ▶ extensive community consultation and involvement of communities in the development of the Museum's programs, facilities and future plans, working with communities to establish information and knowledge networks
- ▶ public and educational programming which has attracted enthusiastic participation from schools across Australia and high regard for the strong links between the Museum's exhibitions and the content of school curricula
- ▶ contemporary relevance where the Museum deals with important and sometimes controversial issues in an open way by providing a forum for debate and from a national perspective. The Museum's information and communications technology and broadcasting infrastructure is used to bring debates and discussion to a wider audience
- ▶ the presence of the Museum's hosting staff who, on the floor, have made an important contribution to visitor satisfaction.

The Museum faces a number of priorities to be addressed in the coming years which include:

- ▶ fostering a greater understanding of Australia's history and culture and place in the world, through the Museum's future exhibitions, public and educational programs
- ▶ improving the development and management of the National Historical Collection and other cultural resources held by the Museum
- ▶ maximising the Museum's capacity to generate revenues off-Budget, through its philanthropic, endowment and sponsorship programs and merchandising activities.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of my fellow Council members in guiding the Museum towards the successes it has achieved during the year. I would also like to express the Council's appreciation to the Hon. Peter McGauran MP who, as the former Minister for the Arts and the Centenary of Federation, took an active interest in ensuring the Museum's success before and after its opening.

Finally, all members of Council join me in congratulating the Director, Dawn Casey, and her staff on the Museum's outstanding success during its first full year of operation and for ensuring that the Museum is recognised nationally and internationally as an important contributor to the cultural, social and educational fabric of the nation.

Yours sincerely



Tony Staley
Chairman of the Council
National Museum of Australia

16 August 2002

INDUSTRY AWARDS for work associated with the National Museum of Australia



The National Museum of Australia at dusk

Architecture

**Blueprint International
Architecture Awards 2001, London**

Best New Public Building

*Ashton Raggatt McDougall and
Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan*

**Royal Australian Institute of
Architects
(ACT Chapter) Awards 2002**

Best Public Building

*Ashton Raggatt McDougall and
Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan*

Clem Cummings Award

Dawn Casey

Building

**Master Builders Association
Annual Awards 2001**

National New Commercial
Building Award over \$10 million
National Partnering
in Excellence Award

Bovis Lend Lease

Australian Institute of Steel Construction 2001

Industry Innovation and Project Delivery Award

*Ashton Raggatt McDougall and
Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan*

**National Electrical Contractors
Association Awards 2001**

Best Project Award for works valued at more
than \$500 000

O'Donnell Griffin

Specialist building automation, unrestricted
value award

Wormald Fire Systems



**IES Award of Excellence for
Lighting Design 2001**

Meritorious Lighting Award

*Vision Design Studio/Ashton Raggatt McDougall
and Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan*

Dulux Colour Award 2001 — Commendation

*Ashton Raggatt McDougall and
Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan*

**DuPont Antron Carpet Design Awards
2001 — Commendation**

Public Space/Retail

*Ashton Raggatt McDougall and
Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan*

Services

Golden Service Awards 2001

NSW/ACT Regional Award of Recognition of
Excellence in Cleaning a Leisure Venue

Tempo Cleaning Services

Other

**Centre for Australian Cultural Studies
Awards 2001**

Group Category

National Museum of Australia

THE PEOPLE'S MUSEUM — WHAT THEY SAY

My favourite thing was the fire display because my dad was there.

He came from SA.

Scott aged 7

My favourite thing is what I can learn here and have fun doing it.

Melissa aged 11

My favourite place in the museum was the story teller in the cubby house. I had heaps and heaps of fun. Thankyou.

Jessica aged 6

My favourite thing in the museum is the Aboriginal stuff and the fastest horse's heart.

Hiromi aged 8

I liked making a video of my life story. It was fun. Keep that signature cause when I'm famous it will be worth money.

Zoe aged 15

I like the way important people and ordinary Australians are given equal emphasis. You can really relate to a lot of what is on exhibit.

May 2002 visitor

Circa, kSpace, Nation — I liked the presentation of the exhibits, and the variety. The space itself is welcoming — you don't feel like an intruder.

January 2002 visitor

Not enough about Captain Cook.

A bit noisy, and made us a bit dizzy and claustrophobic.

March 2002 visitor

A profound intellectual mistake.

Quadrant

My favourite thing is all the cubbys and hands on activities. Thanks for making this museum kid friendly.

Samantha aged 12

It's a courageous museum and the only one I've visited which both informs and creates a platform for debate.

April 2002 visitor

A richly filled exploration of indigenous history, art and culture on offer... the balance between display, education, scholarship and entertainment.

The Australian



Lisa aged 12

My favourite thing in the Museum — child's drawing

There should be brochures in
different languages.
January 2002 visitor

Aboriginal display is excellent and
honest. Delighted the Museum was
free — that was a pleasant surprise.
January 2002 visitor

It is an ugly building but it has
wonderful things inside. That is
the reason we came here —
because it is so ugly.
April 2002 visitor

I found it difficult to find my way
when my husband went to Mars.
May 2002 visitor

I don't feel comfortable with the
layout yet. I'm used to things laid
out in chronological order,
because of my age.
January 2002 visitor

kSpace is excellent. The theatres,
Visions and Circa, depict everything
already seen and to be seen.
Liked the kitchen, and the section
on communications, and the
garden in concrete.
January 2002 visitor

Makes me proud to be Australian, to
see how much we've achieved — and
how much more we need to do.
October 2001 visitor

I like the thematic approach. It's
different to most museums. It's
people-friendly, fresh and different.
January 2002 visitor

Next time I come I will bring a torch.
April 2002 visitor

So beholden to a narrow contemporary
secularism ... gee-whiz fixation on
expensive interactive exhibits.
The Australian

Sneering ridicule at white history.
The Daily Telegraph



My favourite thing in the Museum — child's drawing

It is so extraordinary, so uncensored
a vision, one wonders how it ever
happened ... Will certainly be the
greatest achievement in our
Centenary of Federation.

The Age

The museum promises, love it or
hate it, to be startling for as
long as it stands.

The Canberra Times

A museum in motion, small in scale
but big in ideas, supply and sexy.

Time Magazine

It is a wonderfully democratic
museum.

The Sydney Morning Herald

SOME HIGHLIGHTS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN 2001–2002

- ▶ The Government, following a pricing review, allocated additional funding over four years to the Museum. As a result, the Museum Council was able to approve continuation of free entry for visitors
- ▶ Eleven major international and national awards including the Blueprint International Architecture Award 2001
- ▶ More than 900 000 visits between July 2001 and June 2002
- ▶ Over 90 per cent of visitors satisfied or very satisfied with both their visit and the quality of the exhibitions
- ▶ Two major temporary exhibitions, *Australia's Lost Kingdoms* and *To Mars and Beyond: Search for the Origins of Life*, received a high level of satisfaction from visitors (89 per cent as good or very good for *Australia's Lost Kingdoms* and over 90 per cent for *To Mars and Beyond: Search for the Origins of Life*)
- ▶ The success of Sky Lounge: Cinema Under the Stars which attracted 3000 young people over six nights, many of whom had not been to the Museum before
- ▶ In association with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), the launch of the CD-ROM and book, *People of the Rivermouth: The Jorr Texts of Frank Gurrmanamana*
- ▶ In partnership with Old Parliament House and Questacon, the inaugural national forum on performance in cultural institutions was held, attracting more than 100 practitioners from theatres and cultural institutions across the country
- ▶ Fifty-nine seminars, broadcasted forums and lectures presented at the Museum
- ▶ The two-day forum Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience
- ▶ Staging the week-long Indigenous cultural festival, Tracking Kultja: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Festival, which provided the opportunity for Indigenous people representing 50 communities and 20 businesses from across Australia to share their cultures with more than 8500 visitors
- ▶ More than 82 000 school students and 1800 schools visiting the Museum as part of the Schools Programs
- ▶ Collaboration with Reed Education Australia (Rigby division) to provide the content of 27 books and other material for primary school children across Australia
- ▶ The Talkback Classroom series where students interviewed seven prominent politicians and opinion-makers in the Museum's Studio, broadcast on ABC Radio's national youth network Triple J and webcast to schools
- ▶ An industry partner in five Australian Research Council Linkage research projects worth \$2.6 million
- ▶ Renewal of the Museum's acquisition program with 93 collections being approved by Council during the year
- ▶ Coordinating a series of master workshops in photographic conservation, funded by the American J Paul Getty Grant Program, in association with other cultural institutions.

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